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Mrs Thatcher's Last Resort

Benjamin Disraeli was too modest when he referred to a Conservative government as 'an organised hypocrisy'. The description applies, often with redoubled force, to the Tory Party in opposition. Quite often in the past two decades, both in and out of office, the Conservatives have exhausted their limited stock of ideas. Usually, this predicament is an early-warning signal that they are about to return to the issue of immigration.

The cynicism of this last resort tactic has seldom been more blatant than over the course of the past week. Thoroughly derided on all hands for their failure to agree on incomes policy, on trade union strategy, or on devolution; and with their leader looking increasingly rinsed-out in the Commons and the country, they fed the less expensive Sunday newspapers last weekend with a sorry kind of 'scoop'. Perhaps we should not grudge them the few paltry successes that do lie within their reach – at least the prejudiced voter now knows where they stand, and if he cannot descry their policy on anything else then so much the better for prejudice.

The Tories first began to flirt with this issue, and break their undertakings to the new Commonwealth, at a time in the early Sixties when the first EEC negotiations were starting to founder and they were left without a policy. Then, in the doldrums of opposition in 1968, their rank and file were easily electrified by the cloacal fantasies of Enoch Powell. On that occasion Edward Heath saw a challenge to his own authority and acted accordingly. But when in government a few years later, surrounded by the shards of his industrial relations policy, he sanctioned Reginald Maudling's Powellite Immigration Act. The mean streak that runs clear down the middle of the Tory Party has to be given the occasional indulgence. The problem is that, once let out of the bottle, the genie is hard to catch.

Most British citizens are white. A large minority are black and brown. This is the result of an imperialism which the Tory Party wanted to defend much longer than was justifiable. One restitution made for that was that a certain number of people were given the right of abode in the United Kingdom, and their passports said so in so many words. The point of this simplistic reminder is that black and brown faces are not present in *our* country; they are present in their own. To object to the numbers is as much or as little legitimate as it would be to question the indigenous birth-rate. No doubt there should be a policy on population and on immigration. No country denies itself the right to have one. But it cannot be based on colour.

The Tory proposals are long on suggestion and short on detail. They create the impression of a tough line on immigration without specifying the exact target. We can expect a good deal of head-shaking from Mr William Whitelaw about 'loopholes' before long, and no doubt the star of Mr Keith Speed MP will continue to rise while he talks about 'abuses' of the family permits. But the manner, the style and the timing of this new announcement are barely-concealed appeals to prejudice.

There was a time when a substantial section of the Conservative Party took its responsibilities to Commonwealth citizens seriously. That group made common cause with Hugh Gaitskell in his battle against the racialist provisions of the 1961 legislation. They stood up for the idea, both decent and practical, that new arrivals should be citizens of 'no mean city'. This is still a principle, both for its own sake, and because it will be disastrous if we begin to look for scapegoats for our decrepit industrial and social arrangements. Flanked by the mediocrities she has promoted, Mrs Thatcher now appears to agree with the view that it is immigrants themselves who are the 'problem'. Hardly a week passes without sonorous clichés from her about individual liberty. The only discernible plank in her current platform proposes to cramp and restrict one group of individuals even more than they are already. It was Sir Oswald Mosley's son who said of him that 'while the right hand dealt with grandiose ideas and glory, the left hand let the rat out of the sewer'. Is Mrs Thatcher happy to expose herself to the same charge?

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Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

Power to the Corridor

The committee room corridor is one of those public parts of the Palace of Westminster in which I am allowed, as your representative, to *see* what is happening. Whereas downstairs, in for instance the ways and means corridor, one has as it were to grope. One is allowed ears, but no eyes. How strange we lobby correspondents must look, as we feel our way along the walls, gingerly advancing towards the Members' lobby and occasionally bumping into the Members themselves. And how acutely, in default of sight, our other senses have been attuned. Sniff, sniff. An aroma of 'Quelquechose très sexy pour les très très riches' tells us that Sally Oppenheim has been at the atomiser again. Sniff, sniff, sniff. A blast of Winfield's 'Scottish Bluebell' tells us that Margaret Bain has been playing with that Junior MP's outfit she got for Christmas. And that lingering scent of 'Les nuits très longues et plutôt bitchy de Westminster' must, just must, have come from Barbara Castle.

But upstairs again we are restored to our full senses. Or rather we are until we decide to see how Sir Kenneth Berrill and his Think Tank team are facing up to the Commons Expenditure Committee. This turns out to be a perfectly stultifying way of spending an afternoon. The committee room smells like a sauna full of carrion. The subject of discussion is – does John Odling-Smee describe himself as a specialist or a generalist in the matters on which he has written? (Surely a man who can describe himself as Odling-Smee is capable of anything.) The six members of the Think Tank sitting on either side of Sir Kenneth stare truculently at the table. The rest of the company, the MPs and the observers, pass the afternoon in an agony of boredom and heat. On your behalf, I get out while the going is good.

And proceed down the corridor, with a respectful nod in the direction of the portrait of Macaulay, to committee room eight, where Russell Kerr is explaining why his committee, the Select Committee on nationalised industries, have decided to send out the Serjeant at Arms to summon Sir Charles Villiers to their presence. Now here is something. Were Sir Charles to refuse, it appears that he would be hauled up before the Bar of the House of Commons to be rebuked by the Speaker. This is a rare event. The last time it happened, it happened to the man who now writes quite the vilest column in Fleet Street, John Junor. This was in 1957, when the *Sunday Express* ran a story claiming that MPs were fiddling their petrol expenses. (The scandal had one interesting by-product – it launched Alan Watkins on his journalistic career.)

From his manner, it appears that Kerr is somewhat overawed by the solemnity of the step he is taking. Nobody is quite sure where the matter will end – Tyburn, the Tower of London, the hulks. But it is generally agreed that a blow has been struck for the power of the backbencher. The question is – is the power in question a desirable one or not? Should select committees have this kind of power?

There are, on the Left, two views. It is agreed, of course, that backbenchers should have more power, and that they should be given more to do. As one left-winger put it to me, MPs today are second-rate social workers and third-rate legislators. They will always tell you how busy they are, but the fact is that they busy themselves with the wrong sort of things. Constituency work is important, but it is not the primary task of an MP. A backbencher, frustrated of any opportunity to achieve real political power, may make his constituency work his whole life, or he may turn to Europe, or to drink. Or he may, like some I could mention, devote his time to bogus, unofficial interparty groups dedicated to aimless freeloading. A conscientious MP however will tend either to spend a lot of time in the Chamber, or to work on select committees.

The two views may be described as Footery and Bennery. (Where Flannery comes in I'm not sure.) Footery is the one which sees the Chamber as the great place – the be-all and end-all. The major backbench exponent of Footery is Dennis Skinner, the sea-green incorruptible of the Labour Party. Not only is Skinner opposed to those parts of the Select Committee's report on steel which seek to reduce the workforce. He is also suspicious of the political character of select committees in general, feeling that they undermine pure party politics. He is against all-party deliberations or investigations. Like Foot, and like his fan Enoch Powell, he is a Great Parliamentarian of a traditional cast.

Now Bennery insists that it in no way seeks to undermine pure party politics. After all, it is a tenet of Bennery that the party has a wisdom beyond that of Labour governments, and that Labour governments have a wisdom beyond that of civil servants. What Bennery seeks, in seeking to strengthen select committees, is a means of making the executive more powerful in the pursuit of party aims. That is the theory. True, there will be times when the executive is held in check by a select committee – but those will be times when the executive has erred from the straight and narrow. Benn would like to see a select committee to match every Government Department. He has actually asked Foot to set up one for Energy, and says he would be prepared to give it all the documents it needed. No Varley he! The matter is now in the Lord President's hands.

The trouble is, however, that the advocates of the Bennery view are not the only ones who would like to see strong select committees. As Brian Sedgemore (that excellent MP, who ought to be promoted to a major government job) put it to me: 'Why is it that Nicholas Ridley is on the same side of the argument as me? Because the Ridleys of the world want to put an end to government.' In Sedgemore's view, select committees are too often bipartisan in their approach. Too few dissenting minority reports are written. Too often a report is produced by an apparently Labour-dominated committee, but is in fact composed by Tories. With certain subjects, for instance the Bank of England, there is no possibility of the two major parties agreeing on any but the most footling points. But these faults and dangers can and should be countered. If two conditions were fulfilled – that there should be a select committee to match every Department, and that the committees should have the power to demand the information they seek – the system would be capable of giving real benefit.

And that, surely, is a matter of urgency. It is quite disingenuous of Eric Varley to talk about not having been asked for the information that has been withheld. If the Select Committee had known that it was being misled, it would obviously have behaved differently. As it was, Sir Charles Villiers knew, the DTI knew, and the *Sunday Telegraph* knew last July. The fact that the Select Committee did not know is somewhat humiliating.

As for Varley's remarks about honouring manifesto commitments in preserving steel jobs, one is delighted to hear that the minister feels so strongly about the matter. Planning for full employment, the industrial strategy, the honouring of election pledges – if these are Government priorities, we shall all raise our hats to the Government. But the argument is severely weakened if steel jobs are preserved at a cost which the public is not allowed to know, and in a manner on which Parliament is not permitted to pass an informed judgment. The Labour Party did not make obfuscation a pledge. The manifesto did not contain a commitment to obscurantism. Nor is the management of nationalised industries such a trivial matter from the Labour Party's point of view that its members on the Select Committee should be happy to be gulled by their own minister's inadvertence.

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William Chislett

Spain's Election Year

Spaniards will have plenty of chances this year to exercise their new-found right to vote, tested last June when the country went to the polls for the first time in 41 years, for 1978 has already been billed as 'the year of elections'. No one knows, not even Prime Minister Suarez, the exact order in which the elections will come, but trade union, municipal and fresh general elections after a referendum on the new constitution to replace Franco's Fundamental Laws will be held. The Government found to its surprise at the end of last year that the price of democracy was not as high as it had thought. After paying out the money due to those political parties, which won seats in the Cortes in the June election, it found that it was left with a surplus of £4m. The Government budgeted for £15m. and paid out £11m. – which came as a much needed boost for the fledgling parties.

Spaniards got through their first democratic year remarkably unscathed, although there were 30 deaths (18 police and 12 civilians) from political violence. 'The Manuses (the people of the island of Manus) of New Guinea are famous for having gone in one generation from the Stone Age to the 20th century. Spaniards are beginning to be famous for going from a dictatorship of 40 years to democracy without revolution or war,' said the bestselling weekly news magazine, *Cambio 16*, in its last issue for 1976. Exactly the same percentage of Spaniards as Britons – 82 per cent in both cases – were satisfied with their way of life, said polls carried out by the magazine; although Spaniards have many more reasons to be discontented. But there is a mood of pessimism here, over and above the normal cynicism of Spaniards. Surrealism would perhaps better describe it, as democracy stops being a word that Spaniards were taught was decadent under Franco. Now they watch the new political class put it into practice, like children discovering a new toy.

'I have the very painful sensation,' Professor Enrique Tierno Galvan, head of the minority Popular Socialist Party said, 'that we are spectators at our own destruction.' For the old guard, democracy is still something horrible, and for the great majority an unknown quantity. They have little at the moment to help them understand it more clearly. They are baffled by the new Cortes, whose debates are not much more lively than in Franco's rubber-stamp days, when it was not uncommon for those few attending to fall asleep.

The new representatives still fall asleep from time to time on the polished wooden benches of the 19th-century chamber, but never when Manuel Fraga, head of the neo-Francoist Popular Alliance, and Santiago Carrillo, leader of Spain's Eurocommunist party, confront one another in debates. It was only eight months ago during the electoral campaign that Fraga said he would never sit down with a Communist. Now he has no option. In the last debate on public order, arising from condemnation by the Socialists and Communists of the continued repressive way in which the police put down demonstrations, Carrillo was so incensed by Fraga's remarks about the illegal use of the Republican flag, and the need to strengthen, not disarm, the police, that he pointed his finger at him and told him that in the next confrontation the winners would not be the same as in 1939. It was the first time that Carrillo had lost his cool. A woman spectator from the public gallery then shouted 'Paracuellos' (a village outside Madrid where thousands of people were murdered during the civil war by Republican forces).

Fraga's law and order speech sounded

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like one made by Jose Maria Gil Robles in 1936, just before the civil war, when the leader of the right-wing CEDA said that politicians were 'present at the funeral service for democracy'. This was no funeral service, albeit diehards have been in mourning since Franco's death, but a belated fiery baptism of the Parliament.

The house that Franco built is being dismantled brick by brick, with the ruling Democratic Centre Union party making sure that the foundations – the armed forces, the police, the economic 'bunker' and the church – suffer a minimum of disturbance during the removal. There have been no purges in the de facto powers. How could there be? Franco died with his boots on, and was not overthrown like his Portuguese counterpart. There have been a few manoueuvrings of positions among those controlling important military regions, but the police have hardly been touched. Roberto Conesa, who in the Fifties was rooting out communists like Simon Sanchez Montero (16 years in prison, now a communist deputy for Madrid), is back as head of the new Antiterrorist Brigade.

The armed forces are swallowing the democratic changes reluctantly, but thanks to the tireless work of the liberal Defence Minister, Lt. General Manuel Gutierrez Mellado, in a disciplined way. The General has become very unpopular with the conservative military hierarchy as he seeks to make the armed forces into a professional, non-political body. His enemies openly accuse him of being a traitor and a freemason.

The seven-year sentence imposed on Air Force Captain Dominguez at the end of December by a court martial for belonging to the now disbanded Democratic Military Union was a pertinent reminder of how sensitive the 'ultras' remain two years after the death of their hero. The Captain, who returned from exile last year, will not have to serve the sentence as he fell within the terms of the October amnesty, but he is separated from the armed forces. Too many sabres would rattle were an overt democrat to be allowed back within the ranks.

The outcome of the trade union elections, now being held, will considerably clarify the relative strengths of the socialist General Union of Workers, and the communist Workers' Commissions. The Centre 'Party' (it is really a federation of 12 parties who have now agreed to disband), that wily conglomeration of self-perpetuating interests, many of whose leaders were converted to democracy in the back of a limousine at the end of the dictatorship, has no trade union. Employers are visibly beginning to tremble at the inevitable gaining of more left-wing muscle. Of course there is a catch, for the elections are only 'provisional' until the new labour law is approved, by which time Suarez hopes that his party may have a trade union like the Italian CISL. In this election Suarez will tell his supporters to vote for the host of independent unions.

Faced with an increasingly vociferous Left, the main families are closing their ranks. Banks, of which Spain seems to have almost as many as bars, have started to merge. In the latest merger at the end of December Banesto and Banco Coca, 90-percent owned by the Coca family, came together to strengthen Banesto's position as the leading Spanish bank. Its board of directors includes such regime stalwarts as Gregorio Lopez Bravo, who failed to get elected last June for the Popular Alliance. With friends like Lopez Bravo, the Alliance, which overspent in the election on the assumption that it would win more than 16 seats, need have no financial worries.

While political records drawn up by the police during the dictatorship are being gathered together and destroyed, parties are drawing up their political programmes in preparation for their congresses. The Communists in February will start the ball rolling by holding their first congress in Spain since the civil war and, true to the headlining capacity of its leader Carrillo, it will be full of surprises; not the least that the party will probably become the first officially to depart from the Marxist-Leninist concept and declare itself simply Marxist.

The new constitution, which will be the fourth to be used by Spain this century, has been finished with remarkable speed and lack of drama. It should be approved by June, with the Socialists kicking up the most fuss over the issue of the monarchy. They will insist that Spain should be a republic and that the head of state be a president and not a king, but really they could not care less and are playing to the gallery. Theirs is a double game and Carrillo is staying out of it. King Juan Carlos told me when I saw him towards the end of last year that the Socialist leader Felipe Gonzalez will be a 'surprise'. He would not elaborate further. Meanwhile the people of Madrid seem more concerned in getting into see *Last Tango in Paris* which opened this month.

Madrid

Roger Omond

South Africa's Other Terrorism

'This year can't be worse than 1977,' said somebody shortly after the New Year was ushered in with South Africa's usual drunken car-hooting. 'Can it?' he asked desperately searching for optimistic reassurance. Yes it can. The year was exactly a week old when banned University of Natal lecturer Rick Turner was gunned down in front of his two young daughters. South Africa's terrorist epidemic had entered a new phase.

Turner, a brilliant Marxist political scientist, was far from being the first victim of right-wing gangsterism. Up to 1974 there had been at least 100 reported cases. Since then there have been many more. And – surprise, surprise – only one court case. The authorities don't appear too concerned about right-wing terrorism, although the liberal press is always accused of double standards when it draws attention to this phenomenon and does not beat its editorial breast over every incident of terrorism from the Left. Police Minister James Thomas Kruger, quick to rush in with a statement after the Johannesburg Carlton Centre bomb blast and most other incidents of anti-government terrorism, has remained unusually quiet over right-wing attacks. Nor does he appear eager to activate his police force. In 1974, presented with the list of 100-odd rightist terrorist incidents, he said: 'What do you expect me to do? I am not a policeman.' He added the victims should report to the police and write to him if not satisfied: not much comfort there. And in December last year Lieutenant-General Mike Geldenhuys (former head of the Special Branch) said it had not been proved that any of these cases had been politically motivated.

The surprising factor in all these revenge and/or intimidatory attacks is that nobody was killed before Rick Turner. Cars have been firebombed and tampered with, houses shot at and bombed, parcel-bombs sent through the post. (There was, in fact, one earlier fatality when exiled Black Consciousness leader Abraham Tiro was killed by a parcel-bomb in Gaderone but Dr Turner's death was the first known political murder of a white radical in South Africa itself.) One of the most sickening incidents of right-wing intimidation was the skinning of a cat belonging to the retarded daughter of radical theologian Dr Basil Moore. The cat was left at the Moores' front door with a ribbon round its neck. The family left the country shortly afterwards. More recently the five-year-old daughter of banned editor Donald Woods was sent an acid-impregnated T-shirt. They too left.

Unlike most extremist organisations, which scramble to claim responsibility for acts of terrorism, only one right-wing South African organisation has ever admitted to being on the warpath. That was the right-wing Scorpio Group, two of whose members were caught red-handed painting defamatory slogans on a wall at the University of Cape Town. They were also the only two ever to be convicted of right-wing terrorism. The Left believes (with some justification) that police investigations often are cursory at best. And there is a well-founded suspicion that at least some of these criminals operate from police stations.

South Africa, in the words of one black playwright, is 'a land where a cop is not your friend'. The politicians have legislated their prejudices and fears on to the statute book and demanded that the police enforce them against the wishes of the majority of the population. The police seldom attract the cream and political considerations go a long way in deciding promotion (as they do in all South African Government Departments). And, naturally police forces always attract their ration of sadists, particularly in a society that gives its political police

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such unfettered control over suspects.

After Turner's murder, South Africa now faces the possibility that there is a death squad: we are now in the banana republic league, perhaps fitting as Pretoria is trying to make friends with countries like Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia. What is more certain is that a number of policemen are trigger-happy. In 1975, for example (the latest year for which figures are available), a total of 134 people were shot dead and 382 injured by police in the execution of their duties. The same year 193 policemen were convicted of assault or culpable homicide. Of these 14 had previous convictions for assault. Eighteen of the 193 were dismissed from the force: the rest presumably are still in uniform. As uniformed police assaults (let alone those committed by the plain-clothes Special Branch) are notoriously difficult to prove, this must be the tip of the iceberg.

This is one side of the picture. The other is that South Africa is a violent society: 8,500 murders and 150,000 cases of assault a year. In any single year more murders are committed in South Africa than were reported in England and Wales between 1900 and 1949. These crime figures are reflected in a daily prison population (sentenced and unsentenced, and swollen by statutory apartheid 'crimes' like offences under the Pass Laws) of close to 100,000. South Africa hangs more people every year than the rest of the world put together (as Mrs Helen Suzman has noted). In addition more than 2,900 people are sentenced to corporal punishment every year with an average of just over five strokes a person.

Crime among blacks is at least partly a backlash against apartheid. Ironically, the crime figures may show a decrease when they are released to the white Parliament later this year, and the Government will not be sure whether it is pleased. The students who control some of the black townships have closed shebeens and burned down beer-halls in an effort to concentrate the people's attention on the fight against apartheid. And, although tsotsism (juvenile delinquency) has sometimes accompanied political unrest, the students have curbed some of the drunken criminality supposedly endemic in the townships.

Meanwhile the Left waits for the next outbreak of right-wing terrorism. The private investigator retained by the Woods family to investigate the acid-impregnated T-shirt sent to their house, is fatalistically convinced he could be the next target. 'I just hope they don't get my family as well,' he told a Sunday newspaper. He should know what he is talking about: Donald Card is a former member of the Special Branch and he has pinned the blame for the T-shirt incident and the shooting-up of Woods's house 18 months ago on members of the Special Branch. But the police have not charged anybody despite the evidence put before them.

Unless the governing Nationalist politicians like Kruger (notorious for his statement that Biko's death left him 'cold') and MP Frederick Le Roux ('I would have killed Biko') change their attitudes the grim prospect is that 1978 can, indeed, be worse than last year.

East London

Keith Harper

American Unions Lose their Way

Americans are saying that the labour unions have lost their clout. Their membership is declining while the size of the labour force increases: and the feeling is that George Meany, now a somewhat creaky 83, and head of America's equivalent of the TUC, the AFL-CIO, should be given his very last long-service medal and shown the door. But the complaint continues that Lane Kirkland, Meany's likely successor, will not be much improvement: and that the trade union barons in Washington never bother to move beyond the Potomac.

But the real weakness in American labour has only a narrow connection with Meany's age or a union's membership. It has everything to do with the failure of many union leaders to make any more than obligatory references to human rights and the concerns of the poor. To some extent this is a reflection of the change in the union leaders' constituencies. Over the years the movement has played its part in helping to obtain for its members full shares in the economic system. Many of them now live in the suburbs, own two cars and a boat, worry about their children's experiments with drugs, complain about taxes and avoid going downtown to have dinner because they are afraid someone will mug them. Thus they feel little inclination to campaign for those who have not got their share of the cake.

If the public at large give the matter much thought, it is to say that the heart of the unions' message is still a promise to fight for labour law reform and jobs. They have the organisational ability to press for jobs, but not the heart which leads to organised demonstrations up and down the land. Unlike the British unions, whose excuse is that they cannot defy the Labour Government, the AFL-CIO owes no historical affiliations to the Democrats. 'Your unions are very much a part of the political structure,' says Bill Wimpisinger, leader of the International Association of Machinists and rank outsider to succeed Meany. 'We are still struggling.' Far more than the TUC, the AFL-CIO is a bureaucracy which has no interest in organising. Wimpisinger also feels that it is isolating itself in society. 'Blacks, women, consumers and many others now perceive labour as an enemy. As a result our political influence is on the wane and none of us have enough pride.'

Merely organising workers must be one of the American labour movement's most considerable domestic headaches. Meany confidently puffs his cigar and announces that with 13½ million members, the AFL-CIO has 'the largest single grouping of organised labour in the world'. He is right. It exceeds the TUC, its closest rival, by 2 million. What he fails to mention is that it is a declining membership. In the last two years, 500,000 people have been lost to it, not all of them – he admits – through unemployment. The inescapable fact is that today the AFL-CIO represents one-seventh of the working population, whereas the TUC speaks for about a half. Admittedly this assessment does not account for the Teamsters with well over 2 million members, and the Autoworkers with nearly 1.5 million. Both are outside the AFL-CIO – the autoworkers because of political differences between Meany and the late Walter Reuther and the teamsters for their damaging link with the mafia and organised crime.

Apart from unemployment, another muffled excuse is that new jobs are increasingly white-collar and difficult to organise. But perhaps the most cogent reason for the unions' failure to organise has been their inability to take the South. In the South the unions are pitifully weak. Where they have an already established base in other parts of the country but have been affected by economic and social change, the unions have shown a remarkable facility for diversification. In San Francisco, for instance, the dockworkers are into banking to stave off a declining labour position along the Western seaboard. But in the arid South, where they have no history, they are weak and being fiercely resisted by both government and industry. General Motors has six new plants in the South, all but one of which are non-union.

In the legislation field the unions have placed great faith in the so-called 'labour reform' package specifically designed to get at firms like J. P. Stephens. The legislation now before the Senate will speed up the procedures of the National Labour Relations Board. But it is not the kind of package they wanted. The reforms will not affect procedures involving people already in union membership and President Carter has not been able to authorise the repeal of individual States' right-to-work laws. Their failure to lobby successfully on a

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number of other major issues recently can partly be ascribed to the feeling instilled in the minds of many Americans by the Carter Administration: the President wants to steer a middle course and is not anxious to be seen pandering to any one group. Labour disowns responsibility for the problems of organised crime's penetration of some of its own unions. Worse still, it discourages Congressional committees from exploring the crime issue. Whether it is true or not, there are those in Washington who say that the old-style labour lobbyists cannot count on the automatic support of the new breed of Democratic Congressmen who are not 'ideologues'. Labour's financial gifts to Congressional campaigns in 1976 totalled $8.2m., an increase from $6.2m. in 1974. But nobody has yet been able to itemise where labour's contribution made the difference between victory and defeat for a Democratic candidate.

An exceptionally bitter struggle between the unions and this American multinational suddenly took wing nearly two years ago when the entire labour movement decided to make J. P. Stephens a 'cause célèbre' in US labour history. Stephens, which produces textiles and blankets for sale in thousands of outlets throughout the States, has been systematically frustrating the efforts of one union to organise its plants in the South. The firm takes the unshakeable view that it is cheaper to flout the law and pay large fines for contempt of court rather than to let a union through its factory gates. Up to now this view has held good and a national boycott mounted by the AFL-CIO, the church and a large cross-section of the American public appears to have made no impact. Ostensibly the battle is for the right of a union to organise. Boiled down, however, the J. P. Stephens struggle represents the fight that American labour is waging to gain the South. The mountains still to be climbed there were best explained by a labour lawyer working for the NLRB out of Atlanta. For every J. P. Stephens, he said, he had a personal knowledge of 'another half-a-dozen like it' in his area alone. If J. P. Stephens cracks, of course, then the rest may go under quickly.

A Carter man may have been speaking the truth when he explained that American labour has lobbied secretly on a number of important issues like education and race, but was afraid to do so in public for fear of alienating its traditional supporters. But this is to deny the labour movement's true heritage. If American labour has indeed lost its clout, it is because it has lost its way as a social force.

Eric Moonman

Liverpool's Runaway Hospital

The Crown Agents scandal found a disturbing echo last week in another Commons debate on the control of public money. Included in a Public Accounts Committee report, dealing with 60 separate items, was the extraordinary case of the new Liverpool Teaching Hospital.

The hospital project originally caught my eye because it is sited in the street where I was born and brought up – Prescot Street. The decision to build this hospital was taken in 1959, with an estimated cost of £11.7m.; by September 1976 the cost had escalated to £54.2m. and could well reach £60m. by completion. What went wrong?

The first phase of the building was straightforward enough and was completed between 1965 and 1968 at a cost of £2.7m. The Board of Governors of the United Liverpool Hospitals, the body at the time responsible for the project, then decided to build the next two phases together. Involved were not only the main hospital, but also the university clinical departments and the clinical sciences block. In January 1968 the Board of Governors placed a contract with Tersons Ltd for completion of these two phases by March 1974.

By the autumn of 1969 it became apparent that Tersons were in financial difficulties. Their parent company, British Insulated Callendar's Cables, continued with the contract, using sub-contractors, until March 1975 when they withdrew. The Mersey Regional Health Authority, which had by then taken over the functions of the Board of Governors, then made a temporary arrangement with McAlpines so that work could continue until a new contractor could be found.

In July 1975 the Department of Health awarded a new contract to Bovis Ltd, who began work on the site in September 1975. By this stage the cost was £41.5m., rising sharply a year later to £54.2m. The Commons Public Accounts Committee first became aware of the problem in May 1976, when Sir Patrick Nairne, permanent secretary at the Department of Health, was being questioned on cost control of hospital construction, and Mr Robert Taylor, MP, asked about the escalation of costs and the difference in cost between the Liverpool Teaching Hospital and the one at Birkenhead, which was similar in size and considerably less expensive. At a subsequent session of the Committee in June, they were able to question Sir Patrick further on the basis of a paper supplied by the Department. The evidence given by Sir Patrick was, however, published only in part because the Department were about to review the scheme again, and did not wish this to be prejudiced.

The result of the departmental review was that the hospital was to go ahead, because completion was the only way of improving and rationalising the hospital services in Liverpool, improving medical education, cutting costs by closing old hospitals, and avoiding total waste of the expenditure already incurred. The decision was reported to the Public Accounts Committee as also taking account of the satisfactory standards of management and productivity already achieved by Bovis, of the effective control established by the Regional Health Authority, and of the effects that abandoning the project would have on employment in the construction industry. But the report to the Public Accounts Committee revealed one more cause for major expenditure. In order to bring the building up to current standards for fire precautions a *further* £11m. would need to be spent – as much as the original estimate for the whole hospital!

The Committee was outraged, because while it accepted that some of the extra work was the result of a change in building regulations and by-laws in the ten years since the building was designed, some of the work was the result of bad design and should have been obvious from the beginning: for example, inadequate and badly-sited fire escapes. Even more serious, the roof structure, covering some 4½ acres, is now regarded as 'unduly inflammable', as the result of a fire in 1973 in a building with a similar roof structure.

The Department of Health's review of the project came to several conclusions about the causes of the escalation of costs, which, even allowing for inflation, is double the estimate at 1968 prices. This stemmed, first, from the decision to go ahead with the second and third phases of the project at the same time, which meant that more was being attempted than the client, the consultant architect and the contractor could accomplish, and the Department itself was at fault in failing to satisfy itself properly that the scheme was ready to start when it authorised acceptance of the Tersons tender.

Secondly, the Board of Governors had no experience of building and no professional works officer on their staff, and although the Department's staff played a supportive role, they did not have sufficient experience either. The project was also subject to considerable delays caused by industrial action, and finally there was the fire safety problem.

The Department of Health has gained some harsh experience from the failures on this project, the most important of which should not have needed learning – the potential danger of a lack of expertise in both the Department and the Board of Governors in tackling a project of this size. It is argued that the reorganisation of the NHS has brought major improvements in the management of building, and this is no doubt true to the extent that the Regional Health Authorities have regional work officers with professional works staff, but, as one Liverpool MP pointed out: 'It is probable that many of the people now on the authority were also on the board of the old United Liverpool Hospitals', and therefore likely to have been involved in the original decisions. It is to be hoped that the DHSS has learned its lessons with five major hospital projects lined up in the next ten years.

Management problems are not however confined to the DHSS, as a search through the ten PAC Reports quickly reveals. There were the improvements at Devonport Dockyard, originally estimated to cost £20m. which, because the work was not properly planned and thought out beforehand, eventually cost £83m. There was the Inland

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★ To give complete customer satisfaction by efficient and courteous service, with value for money.

★ To increase profitability and earnings per share each year in order to encourage investment and to improve and expand the business.

★ To provide good working conditions and to ensure effective communication at all levels, so as to develop better understanding and help decision making.

★ To ensure that there is no discrimination between staff on grounds of sex, race, colour or creed; by training and development to encourage promotion within the Company, on a basis of merit and ability.

★ To act with integrity at all times, and with a sense of responsibility towards the public.

★ To support managers and their staff in the use of their initiative to improve the quality and profitability of their work, while following the Company's policies.

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Revenue Centre at Bootle, estimated at £2.6m.; again, the work was not properly planned and the final cost was £7.6m. And there was the fisheries research vessel, *Scotia*, which turned out to be totally unsuitable for the work for which it had been designed.

The evidence strongly suggests that few, if any, Government Departments have the expertise in costing and planning which is required to carry out major capital projects. All too often it appears that techniques like critical path analysis, which industrial management employs to keep control of projects, have never been heard of in Whitehall or the Elephant & Castle. Nearly ten years after the Fulton Report, it appears that its recommendations concerning the need for specialists, as opposed to generalists, in the Civil Service, have been virtually ignored.

And by the time mistakes have been discovered, it is too late to do anything except press on regardless, for the procedure for calling Government Departments to account to the House of Commons is retrospective. The PAC takes account only of what *has* happened, not of what *is going* to happen. And while its members spend many hours examining witnesses, reading documents and discussing their reactions, at the end of the day all that happens is a six-hour debate, which can do no more than skim the surface, in which the House of Commons 'takes note of' the Reports. No ministers resign, no civil service heads roll.

The costing and planning of capital projects is a multi-disciplinary specialist sector. It would be wasteful and unrealistic to expect every Government Department to have such specialists, when the number of capital projects per Department is limited in any one year. On the other hand, there is everything to be said for a small 'service unit' with a high level of expertise which would be available to every Government Department with capital projects, and which would be directly accountable to the Public Accounts Committee. The obvious candidate is the public works section of the Department of the Environment, which is responsible for the maintenance of public buildings. But it should not be a subsection of any particular Department, else its expertise is pre-empted by its parent body.

Logically, while it is up to the Department of Health to say what it wants in its hospitals, it is no part of its job to let out building contracts and deal with the intricacies of building regulations and fire precautions. It is time the Government recognised this, and employed its own specialists to tackle these problems.

Patrick Wintour

Lucas Classicus

'Why do they always talk about Sweden?', Keith Joseph once exclaimed in annoyance at the Labour Party, and indeed one of the weaknesses of the Left in Britain is that it is short of examples from the industrialised countries with which to illustrate its case. Enough gods have failed and enough reputations have been tarnished for people no longer to have any faith in prepackaged solutions. The experience of the Lucas Aerospace shop stewards' committee may not be the road to the New Life but within the Left over the past three years it has become some kind of touchstone. What is remarkable about the Lucas combine is that instead of at the last ditch resisting redundancies, caused by cuts in Government defence expenditure upon which their company relies for demand, the workforce has suggested the development of specific alternative socially useful products which the market or the Government should need and to which the engineers' skills could adapt. The workforce's ideas have been encapsulated in their corporate plan (NS 27 May 1977). The philosophical and technical implications of the plan are now being discussed on average 25 times a week in the international media. Three video films have been made. The Fabian Society has recently devoted an entire pamphlet to the subject. Both the TGWU and the Labour Party made the plan central to their own arguments for the feasibility of defence cuts. The Swedish trade unions faced by structural unemployment in the shipbuilding industry (including the reduction of the Gothenberg shipyards by a half in three years) brought over last month two members of the combine committee to explain how the unions could refuse any dismissals and bargain for alternative product lines. Some workers travelled for two days over 1,300 kilometres to hear the discussion. Finally, a unique centre has been set up at North East London Polytechnic to develop the plan's ideas.

In the midst of all this enthusiasm the company's management and the Government have remained nonplussed. The Government in the form of Les Huckfield, the Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Industry, has vehemently denied it is complacent about redundancies. However, the company has reduced their aerospace workforce by 6,000 or a third in the last four years. In the last year the strength of the combine's organisation has blocked any direct sackings but instead exactly the same number of jobs have been lost through natural wastage. It now seems the company are on the offensive again. Their first target is the combine committee as the form of trade union organisation best equipped to deal with a multi-plant company. Lucas will no longer recognise the much-fêted combine; instead they helped form a manual combine committee which met appropriately enough on company premises. They have also become more aggressive with the full combine's leading lights. Mr Brassington of the Birmingham division personnel told Brian Salisbury, a combine activist, in the presence of a full time TASS official that the executive of that division had decided that his activities must be curbed and that 'the company would not tolerate him bringing about social change at Lucas'. Mike Cooley who edits the combine's paper and who went to Sweden as a Scandinavian linguist has been told the corporate plan is not official trade union activity and, as such, must cease. More disturbing a 'mini-Weinstock', Mr Blyth, has recently been appointed as general manager of Aerospace. He has no previous aerospace experience having worked for Maxwell House, a US oil company, Lucas Batteries and Mars. He has already visited all the UK sites explaining there are too many employees and too much factory space. At the Hemel Hempstead site he said specifically there were a third too many workers which implies 4,000 more sackings. Five years ago, the combine intercepted a secret company report on restructuring the aerospace division into 8,000 people on only three sites. The report instructed that the sackings should be implemented 'quickly and decisively'. It seems likely that this is what Blyth has been hired to do, sometime in the spring. A precedent exists. Between the summers of 1974 and 1975 the vehicle component side of Lucas decisively sacked 7,000 workers.

If this scenario is accurate, the combine will have been vindicated in the cruellest fashion. For four years they stressed that the failure to diversify could only bring the destruction of engineering knowledge and the tearing apart of any rational workplace organisation. At a London meeting with MPs the deputy chairman promised that the company was anxious to diversify and that he did not need a combined committee to tell him what to do. However, at factory meetings James Blyth has told shop stewards that it was not his 'intention to diversify in any way' (though Mr Blyth's own career is a monument to diversification). Indeed judging by another company report, intercepted by the combine in the last week, the company is so keen to maintain traditional power relationships they are prepared to sacrifice a marketing survey which shows that one of the combine's ideas, heat pumps, has a potential market of £255m. by 1985.

The combine is likely to occupy in the event of sackings, but they are considering some dramatic newsworthy denouement regardless. For example there are 6,000 kidney failures every year: 1,000 receive transplants, 2,000 are kept ticking over, the other 3,000 go into decline. The shortage of kidney machines means at Birmingham Hospital you go into decline if you are over 45 or under 15. The combine wants to produce more and better machines; a medical team including practitioners, a bio-engineer and a kidney specialist has been set up to help them. The combine are thinking of confronting the Department of Health with needy patients and the information that Lucas has the products and the skills to build the machines. Not only would it be a real job creation scheme; it might shock the Government out of their lethargy about the corporate plan as a whole.

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Malcolm Muggeridge

The Theatre of Fearful Symmetry

It is a common experience among the old to remember the distant past more vividly than recent scenes and happenings. Thus, I can readily summon up the living presence of a Ramsay MacDonald, with his floating hair, his woebegone moustache and fraudulently rolling 'R' 's, whereas Labour Party figures nearer in time like Attlee or Gaitskell, or even Aneurin Bevan, seem already misty and ill-defined. It is like looking at the view from a high hill and finding that distant perspectives are clearly defined, whereas near ones can scarcely be seen at all, or quite disappear from sight.

This applies especially to scenes which, because of their novelty, made a strong impression at the time. For instance, I can remember as though it were yesterday my first voyage to India in 1924. It took five weeks from Tilbury to Colombo, followed by a train journey into India, and then one by boat through the backwaters of Travancore, now Kerala. This first experience of India, when the Raj still seemed securely established, is a particularly vivid memory. The very smells have stayed with me – a mixture of exotic flowers and outside sanitation; also sudden nightfalls, the delightful chill of the Periyar River in which I used to bathe each morning, the tremendous downpour of the monsoon rains through which I used to walk shirtless.

Subsequently, as a knockabout journalist, over the years I have accumulated a whole series of such pictures in my mind; like snapshots in an album. For instance, of Cairo when the Pashas and Beys still dozed over their hookahs under the trees in the old Groppi's Cafe. Or the gloom of Lancashire towns during the depression when I was working on the *Manchester Guardian*. Or Moscow and the Ukraine during the appalling famine brought about by Stalin's policy of collectivising agriculture. Or Geneva when the old League of Nations was still ostensibly functioning, and delegates in overcoats with astrakhan collars and smoking cigars were to be seen strolling up and down the Quai Woodrow Wilson – Titulescu, Politis, Stresemann, Briand, Litvinov, forgotten names. Or Paris at the time of its *soi-disant* Liberation, when the FFI roamed the streets and heads were shaved, and Fresnes Prison was bursting at the seams, and Coco Chanel provided GIs with bottles of Chanel No 5 gratis. Or blitzed Berlin, or atom-bombed Hiroshima. Or Washington in the days of President Truman and Marshall Aid largesse. So many snapshots, but as time passes the more recent ones grow dimmer, until now, when I hold one of them up into the light, I can scarcely tell whether it is Harold Macmillan conferring an honorary degree, or Harold Wilson in his Garter robes, or just Mrs Thatcher down a coal-mine.

Between these remembered scenes and the stereotypes which have already taken shape in essays in contemporary history, whether written or television documentaries and compilations of one sort and another, I detect a wide and ever-widening disparity. How fascinating to live long enough to meet one's own world as history, and find it barely recognisable! What is more, the stereos based on mechanical devices like the camera, the computer and the tape-recorder, not to mention a great range and variety of what pass for being 'studies' scientifically put together, seem to be even more off-beam and out-of-sync than the traditional ones based on contemporary documents and hearsay. In other words, the mechanical devices, precisely because they purport to be factual, are far less reliable in reconstructing the past than personalia, in the same sort of way that a hastily done sketch can give a far clearer impression of a face or a countryside than any photograph, however sophisticated the camera and skilful its user. So it may well happen that the dark age into which we are fast moving will be even more difficult for posterity to reconstruct than previous ones; in their case, the difficulty was the paucity of relevant pabulum, in ours it will surely be its super-abundance and fraudulence. We shall be a lost world because of our mania for self-exposure; for understanding ourselves and explaining and tabulating ourselves. He who will keep his identity shall lose it, and vice versa. The means for recording who and what we are vastly exceed in output and mechanical efficacy anything of the kind in the past. It turns out, however, that what they record is not us at all; rather, a fantasy of their own.

The sendup of history provided by this disparity between my own memories of things past and historical representations and documentary reconstructions of them, is, I confess, very pleasurable and satisfying. Just now, for instance, there is big boom in Rajiana, most of which is so wonderfully unlike the Raj I knew that it holds me spellbound. Again, a film like Marcel Ophuls's award-winning *Le Chagrin et la Pitié*, in the light of what I remember of my time as a liaison officer with the French *Securité Militaire* in North Africa and Paris, is quite hilarious in the distortions and bias of its account of the *Maquis* and the organisation and personnel of the French Resistance. Looking back, at no point can I find a valid relationship between what my eyes have seen and my memory has stored up, and the voluminous archives of one sort and another that are accumulating for future historians.

History, anyway, is the propaganda of the victor, and so is under the necessity of constantly adjusting itself to changing fashions and ideologies. A revolution happens, and gradually, or suddenly and dramatically, history shapes up to the resultant situation. In an authoritarian state like the USSR, such adjustments are overt and explicit. Thus, when, after the Twentieth Party Congress, Stalin's 30 years' rule was obliterated, leaving a mighty hole in the regime's history, the relevant pages in the great Soviet Encyclopaedia – a goodly number – and corresponding illustrations, were deleted, and other pages provided for insertion. Overnight, the omnipresent busts, pictures and statues of Stalin disappeared, along with adulatory inscriptions and all other memorials to his long and bloody dominance. This happened, not just throughout the USSR, but in the satellite countries as well. His place in Lenin's mausoleum was only briefly held; I happened to pass through Moscow while he was still there and dropped in to have a look at him. Somehow he overshadowed poor little shrunken Lenin. I was struck by his sly ironical expression, as though he expected to be thrown out, and even rather relished the prospect, having little taste for spending eternity in such company. A similar process of adjustment occurs in the so-called free world, but more slowly and subtly. It can be best studied in operation in obituaries as they grow or shrink over the years. How many pleasant and instructive hours I have spent in the morgue when I have been working on newspapers.

Now that I am nearing the end of my life (it is almost exactly 50 years since my first contribution appeared in the NEW STATESMAN), hair white and scanty, short of breath, eyesight failing and chronically forgetful, I find myself increasingly preoccupied with this gap between experience and history, between what is recorded and what is remembered, between life and the legend into which it is endlessly being processed – nowadays, with television, visibly. I suppose it could be called, without being unduly pretentious, a quest for reality in a world increasingly enmeshed in fantasy; for eternity amidst the insistent ticking of the clocks, for God when the contrary urge to create a kingdom of heaven on earth and live happily ever after in it, is pulling so strongly in the opposite direction. Names like Pascal, Blake, Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Simone Weil, might, without undue presumption, be cited as having been similarly engaged. On the one hand, the harlequinade of power, on the other, the Kingdom of love beyond the Cloud of Unknowing; on the one hand, the earthly cities which men build and then destroy, on the other, St. Augustine's City of God which men did not build and cannot destroy. A Theatre of the Absurd and a Theatre of Fearful Symmetry existing side by side, with the same actors, the same sets, the same shops and sound and light effects; the same script even, but different versions differently produced.

As for the Theatre of the Absurd, I caught a rather unusual glimpse of it the other evening when I had occasion to participate in some filming in Madame Tussaud's Exhibition after hours. The wax figures without throngs of people staring at them created a very eerie impression. There they all were – Prime Ministers and Presidents, a solid phalanx of Royalty, eminent murderers and Popes and pop stars, celebrated mummers and telly folk – myself a lowly figure among these – silent and still in Baker Street. How wonderful it would be, I reflected, if they were playing at statues,

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as we did as children, and, the game over, all came to as themselves! This did not happen; they stayed in wax, it seemed, in their leisure, as in working hours.

And what of the Theatre of Fearful Symmetry? Well, it is simply the decoded version of the other; what the other is really saying, its inner, true meaning. Thus, inside every absurdity there is a fearful symmetry trying to get out; as every prospectus for a utopia carries its own written-in guarantee of not working, and, for those that have eyes to see, the legend itself proves to be an image of truth. In the Theatre of the Absurd the miser hoards real money, the statesman acquires real power, the sensualist experiences real delight; whereas in the Theatre of Fearful Symmetry the money is seen to be mere paper, the power mere votes, the delight mere pictures in the colour supplements.

The best example I know of the interrelation of the two Theatres is provided by the classic Theatre of the Absurd set up by the Roman soldiers on the occasion of the Crucifixion. They dressed the victim, it will be recalled, in a mock imperial robe, put a crown of horns on his head, gave him a reed to hold for a sceptre, and bowed low before him in sham obeisance. Transferred to the Theatre of Fearful Symmetry, the show is quite different. Instead of, as they supposed, making fun of a poor crackpot shortly to be executed for his fantasies about being king of the Jews, it turns out that the Roman soldiers were, in effect, ridiculing all worldly authority, then or thereafter. There never would be again any imperial robe that did not look as though it had come straight out of a wardrobe-mistress' store; nor any crown that did not have a base of thorns. In the rhetoric of power, however expressed, there would always thenceforth be a death-rattle, in its pomp and circumstance intimations of tinsel and grease-paint. It was the Roman soldiers who were the *farceurs* – they and their gimcrack Roman Empire; their victim, in being ridiculed and in dying, was to become the word dwelling among us full of grace and truth.

Donald Gould

Not Just Doctors' Dilemmas

Doctors possess technical skills and a special kind of learning and experience which enable them to do things to the bodies of their fellow creatures which other people can't do, or can't do so well, or with an equally low chance of producing unfortunate side-effects, like death. But does this give doctors the right or the duty to decide what kind of manipulations of the flesh should be permitted and which should be proscribed?

Two matters currently in the news – the artificial insemination of lesbians to enable them to become mothers, and the taking of measures to secure the rapid, peaceful death of grossly deformed spina bifida infants – have focused attention upon the problems raised when clinical acts and decisions involve ethical and moral issues which engender passions and dispute.

When the AID for lesbians story received national publicity, one of our legislators went before a BBC microphone and told how he intended to demand that the Government should *prohibit* doctors from playing a part in such scandalous transactions, although he didn't explain under what powers any such decree might be promulgated. The British Medical Association, on the other hand, normally the most conservative of bodies, scrupulously avoided any appearance of telling its members how they should respond to a lesbian request for such help, and stated that it was not the doctor's business to make moral judgments, but simply to act as a wise and conscientious counsellor and aid, thus neatly sidestepping a tricky issue and somewhat brutally leaving any practitioners hoping for guidance to work things out for themselves.

Some doctors, of course, are lucky enough not to be troubled by doubts. Two or three years ago the *Journal of Medical Ethics* carried several papers dealing with various aspects of donor insemination (which means fertilising a woman with semen from a man who is not her mate), and one of these, written by Melville Kerr and Carol Rodgers of McMaster University in Canada, described the criteria *they* employed when faced with the task of deciding whether to 'service' not a lesbian but a married, heterosexual woman in this fashion. The assumption of responsibility for entirely non-medical aspects of a clinical procedure was made only too abundantly clear:

> The couple must have a stable, mature relationship. We would at present consider only married heterosexual unions, and would not consider either single women or lesbian couples as prospective parents . . . The couple must be seen to communicate freely and honestly with each other . . . The man should have come to terms with the fact of his subfertility . . . He must be tolerant of the idea of not being the biological father of his child, and have an appreciation that it is in the social role of fatherhood that fulfilment lies rather than in the biological role . . . A pregnancy should certainly not be sought as a means of holding together an unstable marriage . . . A sense of complete trust must be present between the couple and the team. If this is lacking donor insemination should not be attempted.

And so on, and so on, and so on. All good, sound, commonsense, no doubt. But whose job is it to weigh and assess such matters? The doctor's or the client's?

As it happens, that same issue of that same journal contained a report of a case conference concerning a 19-year-old girl who had been referred to a consultant gynaecologist for an abortion. She was a West Indian girl, an orphan, a diabetic, had suffered a miscarriage at the age of 16, and had nearly died during the course of a pregnancy which followed a year later, but which had produced a child who had been farmed out to an aunt. At the time of the pregnancy in question the girl was living alone in a rented room, the putative father didn't want to know, the aunt was already overburdened and had gone off her niece anyhow.

A number of persons, including two distinguished professors of obstetrics were invited to discuss this case. What should have been done? Was abortion justified? Professor Hugh Mclaren, who heads the department of obstetrics and gynaecology at the University of Birmingham (an area within which NHS abortions are notoriously difficult to come by) had to agree that the case, as presented, was one in which the legal case for abortion was established. But he made it clear that he would not have aborted her himself, and took the opportunity to say that he would never 'consider promiscuity or no marriage as an indication for abortion. Nor would I ever advise sterilisation simply to arrange sterile coitus. I might by such advice lead the unfortunate girl into prostitution.' Perhaps he was joking. Or perhaps he believes it to be a part of his doctorly duty to discourage people from enjoying sex.

The point is that doctors are people, and they have the same prejudices, passions, hang-ups, instincts, blind-spots, and the same capacity for charity, insight and understanding as the rest of us – no more and no less. So how are they supposed to deal with the harsh decisions which their calling puts upon them?

Some would like to handle their difficulties by keeping them private. It may seem that the easiest way to deal with a hopelessly disabled spina bifida baby, for instance, is to stop it taking its first breath, or to see to it that death happens within a day or so of birth, without telling anybody, including the parents, that the death has been deliberately contrived or encouraged.

This 'leave it to the doctor and don't ask awkward questions' attitude was well expressed in a letter to *The Times* the other day from Sir John Peel, regular correspondent and former surgeon-gynaecologist to the Queen:

> In our modern society we have an obsession that public debate will solve any problem whereas in fact it not infrequently means that the judgment of the ignorant and ill-informed takes precedence over that of those with experience and special knowledge.
>
> The practice of medicine is about caring for patients individually and their families. I have a strong feeling that too much public debate only makes matters more confused, where difficult and delicate decisions have to be made which primarily concern the individual.

He is wrong – absolutely wrong. The more doctors know about our bodies and how to influence the way they work, the more important it becomes that the rest of us have a say in what they do with their understanding.

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Julian Mounter

Where Will the Boat People Go?

The smoke rising from the crematorium at Lamsing, these days, is of cooking: rice, mainly, and on Thursdays five fishes spread without a miracle between 500. Mingled with the smell of cooking and the odour of the crematorium is the sickly stench of the latrines. The refugee camp is on a tiny island; they have built the toilets on a corrugated iron and bamboo pontoon that marches fifty yards out into the sea only a hundred yards from the shore where the 'boat people' live. The excreta wash the sand where the children play.

Every few days the camp, 200 miles from Bangkok, is visited by a grand chauffeur-driven Toyota, from which emerges an earnest young man with a bundle of papers and a package of promises and apologies. 'We are doing our best, it's the Thai authorities who are the problem; they will not let us give you any more food; if we push them too hard you could be put back on your boats and turned out to sea again.' He is from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. He is earnest but the 1,200 Vietnamese and Cambodian boat people in the Lamsing camp are only a fraction of his problem; there are 100,000 refugees in Thailand. Most of them came by land in the early days after the fall of Cambodia and Vietnam, before the borders were mined. Tens of thousands came from Laos before Thailand started turning them away. Now the Thai Government is anxious that conditions in the camps are 'not too comfortable' in case word gets out and another 100,000 arrive on their doorstep.

In the centre of the Lamsing camp, just below the crematorium ovens at a crossroads of three-feet-wide shanty streets that also serve as open sewers, there is a notice board where they post the names of refugees who have been accepted by America, France, Australia or any other countries who are taking a quota. It's a grim place. The quotas are small and some countries are so selective that often inmates wait for months while new arrivals by-pass them in the scramble to leave.

Susie Ley has been visiting the board daily for five months. She has been told that the United States will take her, but she only half believes it because she has been let down so many times before. In the days before the fall of Saigon, in April 1975, Susie worked for a shipping company. Like thousands of others she believed that when the 'communists' came she would be punished for working for Americans so, as the towns to the north of Saigon started falling, she tried to get an exit visa. I remember the scenes at the Government building which handed out those magic pieces of paper. Even pushy reporters with white faces and bundles of fast devaluing local currency had to spend days negotiating to get out. People like Susie had no hope. Eventually someone in the shipping company said they would smuggle Susie and her sisters out on their last freighter. But when she turned up at the docks she found the pier surrounded by police cars, searching for stowaways. Even when the North Vietnamese were knocking at the front door of Saigon, the South Vietnamese authorities were guarding the back door on the grounds that if they did not there would be panic. There was panic everywhere, anyway.

The rumoured massacres did not happen. 'People disappeared, but mostly it was to the retraining camps and these, at first, were not so bad.' Susie and her family listened to the Voice of America or the BBC World Service. They heard reports of atrocities in Cambodia and speculation that the same would eventually happen in Vietnam. And they heard reports of a 'new life' that those who had managed to escape had found in America and France. They decided to try and escape by boat. Susie had saved some American dollars and some gold which she kept hidden in a box of sanitary towels.

> All food is in short supply. We would queue for hours, sometimes for days for a piece of meat... Often there was no rice, nothing. Everyone in the queue would talk about getting out, about escape. Eventually someone told us he knew a fisherman who would smuggle us out. We handed over almost $900 in gold and notes to a man who asked us to follow his motor scooter to a safe hiding place. I suddenly realised as he dodged through the traffic that he was trying to lose us. We never saw him again.

Five times Susie and her sisters were cheated in this way. No one would take them without a deposit. But when they turned up on the beach or other rendezvous, the contact would not be there. 'But we had to take the risk, there was no other way.' Over a period of two years they were cheated of savings that had taken the family a lifetime to accumulate. Having sold everything that was saleable, Susie raised $3,000 for a final attempt. It almost cost her her life. The fishing boat which was less than 30 feet long leaked badly. The journey to Thailand took nearly a week and, for most of that time, Susie and 30 other people were forced to sit in the fish hold in two feet of sloshing water and oil. Twice North Vietnamese patrol boats came close enough to take a look, but the weather was bad and they did not board. Once in international waters the fishing boat raised an SOS flag, and several times she tried to stop merchant ships for help, but they sailed straight past. By the time they were picked up they had no food or water.

In all 18,000 people have escaped Vietnam and Cambodia by boat. How many have been lost in the attempt will never be known. In the past few months the flood has increased: at the beginning of 1977 around 300 a month were arriving in Thailand; in October 858 arrived, and since then the records have been confused. Thailand has slammed the door and declared that any more boat people will be turned away. Most boats that are turned away make several attempts to land. Some skippers wisely scuttle their craft so that they cannot be turned away, but others have sailed on down to Malaya and, after being turned away again, on to Australia. In a grand Christmas gesture, Australia offered to airlift 1,000 refugees from Malaya to Sydney 'to try to prevent them risking their lives on the treacherous crossing.'

The reception these boat people receive is anything but friendly, and it mirrors the way they are being treated by the rest of the world. Politicians and large sections of the press have labelled the refugees as 'imposters', complaining that they arrive with 'bars of gold' in 'ships with the latest navigational aids'. The truth is that the refugees are not all poverty stricken. But neither are they wealthy. Clearly those trying to escape are those with most to lose. The 'gold bars' are usually just a few 'taels', small pieces of gold which are traditional currency in Indochina. As for the latest navigational aids, most of the boats anchored off the quarantine station in Darwin have nothing but a compass.

A Labour Senator, Ted Robertson, when asked by me whether Australia could really contemplate turning away boats which managed to reach her shores, said: 'Why not? That is what happened to them all the way down here. We have a serious unemployment problem . . . you could say we have 10,000 people too many, anyway.' The Malaysians say they do not want to take any more refugees for the simple reason that if they do it will start a flood that will be uncontrollable. It is already costing them, they claim, around $100,000 a month just to feed the 3,000 people they have now. The Philippines has had 1,700 boat people arrive since June 1975; again they are reluctant to take more, especially now that other countries are slamming the door. Indonesia is keeping a low profile and Singapore has been rigid in its policy of accepting only those who have guaranteed places in third countries.

The West, however, has done little to help. We have given money, but money in this instance is not the problem. Britain has taken only 101 boat people and out of the 240,000 Indochinese who have been permanently resettled, a total of less than 500. The official Home Office line is that 500 have been given entry permits or permission to settle. Only the United States and France have made a significant contribution to solving the growing crisis. The US has so far settled more than 150,000 refugees, including 3,800 boat people. France has settled 37,000, including 1,400 boat people.

What is needed for the West to take the problem seriously. First, they can take more refugees to help clear the camps that are now full. Secondly, they could make much more of the reports coming from Cambodia and Vietnam. Perhaps if friends of the communist countries involved start complaining about the atrocities and the deprivation in the same way as they complain about the treatment of dissidents in Russia and the other Eastern bloc countries, it will help. But whatever we do, we cannot just sit back and hope the problem will go away. It is not going to.

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London Diary

☐ It will, no doubt, be David Steel's weekend – though I suspect it's one he would willingly do without. Blackpool in January is not everyone's idea of fun and the Liberal 'special' (tea-urn on the way up, beer-barrel on the way back) wouldn't exactly be my notion of a treat. But I still can't believe Steel is really in a resigning mood, as predicted by a Liberal lady in the *Guardian* last Tuesday. True, the lady concerned – Nesta Wyn Ellis – is someone rather exceptional: the one time I met her, she told me it wasn't really fair for her to do political journalism as she saw everything ahead of time in the stars. In which case the galaxies must, I fear, at the moment be out of their courses. I can't foresee Steel having any substantial trouble on Saturday – indeed, given that the Liberals have any political sense at all, they have only one genuine option: to close ranks behind him. After the election, of course, it could be a different story but since that's bound to be a catastrophe for them anyway, why on earth should the Liberals want to precipitate it?

☐ The Queen, I see, turned up last week at the memorial service for her friend (and fellow race-horse owner) Lady Zia Wernher held at the Grosvenor Chapel in South Audley Street. Nothing remarkable about that: she had done the same in 1975 – this time at the Guards' Chapel – for her childhood chum and lifelong confidant, Lord Plunket. By contrast, she was a notable absentee from the funeral service held in the same year at Arundel for her Earl Marshal, the Duke of Norfolk – an act of seeming ingratitude that, rightly, provoked some critical comment. Where, then, lies the rhyme or reason behind the choices that the Palace makes? The answer, I'm assured, is not that the Duke of Norfolk was a Roman Catholic but that the Sovereign is inhibited from attending any funerals, at least of those not of the blood royal (a rule broken only once – for Sir Winston Churchill in 1965). Those inclined to challenge the essentially tribal nature of monarchy might perhaps reflect on how, even in the 1970s, the totem of life is not supposed to have anything directly to do with the taboo of death.

☐ And talking of death, I admired the public relations agility with which the Churchill family promptly followed up the admission they had to make about Lady Churchill's destruction of the Sutherland portrait with the announcement that she had decreed that her eyes should be given for medical use (following in the wake, incidentally, of the example given earlier by Kingsley Martin). But I am, I fear, still puzzled by the story of the Sutherland portrait. My own view, for what it's worth, is that the clue to its almost immediate destruction is to be found in an uncannily similar cartoon-portrait that *Punch* had published in 1954 just six months before the 80th birthday celebrations. Drawn by Illingworth, at a time when the agitation for Churchill's retirement was pretty strong, the portrait showed the same pouting lower lip and carried beneath it the brutal caption: 'Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.' It was never forgiven by the Churchill family and my guess is that the two things got mingled in Lady Churchill's mind – just as I'm sure the family hope today is that two other things will get mingled in ours.

☐ One of our new breed of newspaper owners has been going round recently boasting of how he managed to 'arrange' favourable reviews of Edna Healey's biography of Angela Burdett-Coutts, *Lady Unknown*. Certainly the book got some startling good notices – with only the NS and the *TLS* (and, to some extent, Alan Watkins in the *Spectator*) acting as spoilers at a feast of praise. Otherwise it was doffed hats (or PLR begging-bowls?) all round – from the *Guardian* to the *Observer*, from the *Sunday Telegraph* to the *Economist*. Of course the book does represent a considerable achievement and only the congenitally jealous would begrudge Mrs Healey the publicity spin-off she got from being the Chancellor's wife. But what I do question is the abandon with which some of the critics ladled out the compliments. It was, for example, Lady Longford who wrote in the *Daily Mail* of Mrs Healey's 'impeccable scholarship'. After the battering it got last week in the *TLS*, I'd have said it rates just about on a par with Harold Wilson's.

☐ Gordon Cummins, the National Front's Plymouth press officer and one of the informants for our piece last week on the NF in the West Country, appears to have said more than he ought. The Plymouth NF have suspended him from membership of the party indefinitely for 'revealing information prejudical to the security of the party'. His offence seems to have been that he told the local papers, as a result of his statements to the NS, that the Front were using their supporters among the armed services to obtain information on defence cuts. It would be interesting to know who felt their own hands were clean enough to putsch Cummins. Was it the regional organiser, a local government housing officer, recently found guilty of daubing National Front slogans and defacing public property or was it Len Morris, the Plymouth organiser with all his past links with Column 88 and other National Socialist outfits?

☐ One of this week's many tributes to Hubert Humphrey quoted, I noticed, part of the letter that Humphrey as a 24-year-old on his first visit to Washington sent to his fiancée, Muriel Buck. But it only quoted the bit about how Washington had 'thrilled' him to his fingertips. Even more revealing, I've always thought, is this earlier passage:

> The trip has impressed one thing on my mind, Muriel. That impression is the need of an education, an alert mind, clean living and a bit of culture which ultimately will come with age and learning.

Alas, whatever else came with age (or learning), sophistication didn't – with the result that HHH was the only figure I ever watched on an American public platform who could make even Richard Nixon look like a member of the *nouvelle vague*. Opinions of him naturally depended on the period during which one was exposed to him and I saw him during the worst period of his career when he was LBJ's Vice-President. But if I couldn't quite respond to the fulsome spirit of nearly all the obituaries, it was, I suppose, because I can still recall the disdainful tone in which Senator Fulbright once dismissed him as 'a puppy dog with his tongue hanging out' – or the shudder of distaste with which Walter Lippmann used to refer to him as the ultimate proof of LBJ as 'the great emasculator'.

☐ When the NS came out in favour of a 'Yes' vote in the Common Market referendum a couple of years back, a lot of the crossest letters we received came from very grand rural addresses (Middle Wallop Manor House, that sort of thing). Those who wrote them will, undoubtedly, now feel that they've had their worst forebodings confirmed. I'm afraid I feel something different: that if part of the 'price of Europe' is an end to birching in the Isle of Man, then that bit at least is well worth paying.

☐ I shall miss George Hutchinson's Saturday morning column in *The Times*. When it started appearing in 1973 I compared its journalistic approach to that earlier used by Randolph Churchill – and in its often inconsequential mixing of the private and the public domain that comparison certainly held up. But otherwise it was, of course, wide of the mark. For one thing, George's was essentially a well-mannered column – the voice essentially soothing and reassuring rather than hectoring and demanding. It was that (together with his sometimes Pooter-like adventures – as with the £5 note offered for the shoelaces) that lent it its period charm. We shall not, I fear, see its like again.

Crucifer

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard

☐ In what was described by a prosecuting solicitor at Bury Court on Monday as a 'mini crime-passionale', [sic] window cleaner John George Royse attacked another man because he thought he was trying to chat up his girl friend. Royse, of Polefield Gardens, Prestwick, struck him about the head and face after he left the Red King public house in Whitefield one night, causing bruising and swelling. – *Prestwick and Whitefield Guide* (H. Miller)

☐ Plans for a new illustrated magazine along the lines of the old *Picture Post* have been abandoned through lack of interest by advertisers and distributors. The intending publisher, Gerald Kingsland, is now working on a book on electrical repairs to cars. – *UK News and Press Gazette* (Derek Jameson)

☐ Although admitting that he has never tried playing music when his pigs are actually farrowing, Mr Eckley sings to all his animals and says that this definitely has a beneficial effect. – *Tenbury Advertiser* (K. Davies)

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University Forum

Stephen Atkinson

Germany's State of Siege

Becoming a civil servant in the Federal Republic is no easy matter. The candidate's political opinions and, more pertinently, political activities will be examined to see whether he or she passes a test of loyalty to the constitution, to the basic democratic order. Fair enough, one might think. Can't have potential terrorists and spies (cf. the Günter Guillaume affair and Brandt's subsequent resignation) running around the corridors of power. Things, however, have gone sadly wrong. The vast and intricate investigating division of the dramatically-entitled Office for the Protection of the Constitution is causing some observers of the Federal German political scene to doubt the wisdom of further implementing the notorious *Berufsverbot*.

As Professor Ralph Dahrendorf pointed out in an article in *The Times Higher Education Supplement* ('The Problems of German Universities', 15 July 1977), the problem of excluding extremists – real or supposed – from the civil service is made worse by the fact that, at all levels of government, other groups of workers have the status of civil servant, or rather *Beamte* (higher official): people in the post office or on the railways, for example, not to mention school and university teachers. Professor Dahrendorf continues: 'The rules applied to all of them – the gardener of a city cemetery and the university lecturer in botany, the engine driver and the personal assistant of the Federal Chancellor, the research assistant and the social worker – include a test of loyalty to the constitution'. In January 1972, the prime ministers of the constituent *Länder* of the Federal Republic issued a decree concerning the future employment of extremists in the civil service. By the end of 1976, more than half a million people had been investigated and fewer than 500 extremists – again, real or supposed – had been unearthed.

Who are these people seemingly intent on destroying the *Rechtsstaat?* (a very difficult concept to put into English. 'A state based on the rule of law' does not fully put into English the concept of the amalgamation of State and Law = Right). Who are these people sought by the entire machinery of the state? Certainly not the terrorists. The problem for the 'protectors of the constitution' is that the overwhelming majority of those who go under the state microscope for examination do not use violence to achieve their ends. Of course, some might advocate violence, but the vast majority only wish to see the constitution fully implemented.

The first problem for any observer of recent events in West Germany is that there is also no satisfactory interpretation of the word *Verfassungsfeind*, or 'enemy of the constitution', and different criteria for determining one's allegiance to the constitution are used in different *Länder*. The Federal Constitutional Court demands that each applicant to the civil service not only respect the constitution in its present form – including the amendments – but also declare himself to be a supporter of it. On this basis, active support for the constitution seems to be considered a prerequisite for criticism of it. But how far can one criticise before one is accused of acting unconstitutionally?

There are three points which appear important in respect of the *Berufsverbot*. First, the Extremists' Decree (*Radikalenerlass*) is hitting teachers who would put themselves on the left of the political spectrum, although it is aimed at radicals on the Left and Right. Secondly, members of the *Deutsche Kommunistische Partei* (DKP) are frequently affected by the *Berufsverbot*. The party and its members seem to have been declared unconstitutional by state bureaucrats, even though the party is a constitutional one, i.e. no attempt to proscribe the DKP has been made in the Federal Constitutional Court. Thirdly, and most importantly, different criteria of determining anti-constitutional behaviour are used from *Land* to *Land*. The decision to implement the *Berufsverbot* does not seem to be exclusively based on legal or constitutional considerations. It seems that party political considerations often also play a role.

What are the criteria used? In Hessen and West Berlin only 'special activities' are considered grounds for rejecting an application. Mere membership of a radical party does not automatically lead to investigation. In West Berlin some very strange questions have found their way on to the questionnaire civil service applicants have to fill in, such as 'Have you ever put up political posters?' and the highly relevant 'What do you think of communal living?' In the *Länder* governed by the Christian Democrats membership of the DKP or of another left-wing organisation will usually be enough to ensure rejection. In Schleswig-Holstein the Government's education agency keeps an eye on all publications and records all readers' letters and contributions from students and teachers. At the beginning of 1973, it was officially admitted that students are observed. In Bavaria the process has been even more severe. Some applicants for teaching posts were rejected on the grounds that they had taken part in anti-Vietnam-war demonstrations in 1968 and had chanted the name of Che Guevara, not to mention that of Ho Chi Minh.

What about the constitution? Both supporters and opponents of *Berufsverbot* try to use it to defend their own views. Article 3 states that no one 'may be prejudiced or favoured because of his religious or political opinions'. And Article 12 says that 'All Germans should have the right freely to choose their trade, occupation or profession, their place of work and their place of training'. Article 33 states that 'every German should be equally eligible for any public office according to his aptitude, qualifications and professional achievements'.

On the other hand, Article 2 states that the right to the full development of the personality will be denied if one offends against the constitutional order. Article 5 ends by saying that 'freedom of teaching shall not absolve from loyalty to the constitution'. Article 18 sums up: 'Whoever abuses freedom of expression of opinion . . ., freedom of teaching . . . in order to combat the free democratic basic order, shall forfeit those basic rights.' So who is right?

The snooping will continue. It seems likely that it will increase in scope because of the necessity of combating the terrorists. Whether a real witchhunt à la McCarthy will back snooping will not be decided by the Federal Constitutional Court. What is the answer? Is there an answer? In the words of the former Constitutional Court judge Herbert Scholtissek, quoted in a lengthy piece about *Berufsverbot* in the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* ('Staatspension für Revolutionäre?', 9 April 1973), the Extremists' Decree is 'from the legal point of view unconstitutional and from the political point of view stupid and disquieting'.

Stephen Atkinson studies Modern Languages at the University of Bedford.

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

Hearts and Flowers

It is said to be the sign of a weak intellect, or something else of a reprehensible nature and fortunately I forget exactly what, constantly to reread treasured volumes enjoyed in the past, and yet I find that, when my various literary commitments and happy social pressures allow it, I do little else. It affects my pleasure not at all that some of the books I now know nearly by heart. I have just tucked in once again to Lytton Strachey's marvellous *Elizabeth and Essex*, a work despised in its time by some other historians, partly I suspect because of its supreme readability and the enormous sales that it rightly enjoyed. Once more I shook in my shoes at the thought of life among the terrifying agitations of that splendid Court, with heads flying off to the right and left and the whole thing happening a mere 400 years ago. Soon, and I do it every year, I shall read *The Enchanted April* (I make no apology for mentioning, and for the umpteenth time, this charming little mini-masterpiece, its jokes popping up as fresh as paint on each occasion). Then a Wodehouse (any Wodehouse). Then a Dickens (any Dickens).

It is feeble of me, I dare say, not to be struggling with modern novels but a recent happening tells me that I don't miss much by flinching away from most new books. One of them that came my way during the yuletide season has worried me extremely. This is no fault whatever of the authoress, who has done her work admirably. It is just the content that I find disturbing. The book is Claire Powell's *The Meaning of Flowers*, which also means that I shall now have to rethink the whole of my Devon life. Our delightful Travelling Library from Exeter, fully motorised and heavily patronised every Tuesday (11.30 a.m. outside the church) will make, for those who don't actually buy the book, Mrs Powell's fascinating study (Jupiter Books, £5.95) available to all our village readers and then, in this welter of previously hidden tree and flower and herb and shrub meanings, where shall we all be? The answer is, in trouble at once. Take my house, 'Myrtlebank'. Myrtle, I am appalled to discover, means, quite simply, 'love' (Aphrodite, or Venus, was for ever hiding behind myrtle bushes – all the disturbing facts are here). Hence, 'Myrtlebank' becomes Love Bank. The mind flies instantly to a comparable two words, Blood Bank – a bank which dispenses blood. Will your village residents, with their new-found knowledge, think that 'Myrtlebank' is a thinly disguised bordello? To avoid misunderstanding ('Ring three times and ask for Flossie'), I must clearly and at once change the name.

Some of the meanings are, of course, quite plain sailing. The Bultitudes, for example, standing ready to receive the guests at their annual garden party, Giles in his all-purpose grey pin-stripe and Old Dumbletonian tie, and Bunty usually in something floating and lemony ('*Do* be sweet to the Bagshawes. They know absolutely nobody'), station themselves quite naturally against a background of lime-trees (Conjugal felicity) and beeches, the beech meaning, what else, 'prosperity'. If, on the other hand, I invite Canon Mountjoy and his wife (Berenice, I think, though I've never dared to risk it) over to a summer lunch and then place before them, after a first course of anchovy eggs perched on buttered brown squares and showered with chopped parsley (nothing nicer, and quite safe, parsley meaning either 'banquet' or 'useful knowledge'), my cold leg and a tempting salad complete with lettuce and cucumber, they will be sure to think that I am accusing them of being both cold-hearted (lettuce) and over-critical (cucumber). Berenice meanwhile is eyeing rather apprehensively in the centre of the table my tasteful flower arrangement of tuberose (Dangerous pleasures and voluptuousness) and ivy geranium ('I engage you for the next dance'). Our pudding, stewed apple ('Temptation'!) and plums ('Keep your promises'!), worries her even more. Returning to the sitting-room for coffee, I see Mountjoys edging their way carefully past an earthenware crockful of orange blossom ('Your purity equals your loveliness'). As soon as politeness permits, they make a dash for the gate and I am only too relieved that my garden contains no suggestion of 'an arranged meeting' with Berenice, possibly of a clandestine nature, which is exactly what a clump of Everlasting Pea would imply.

But now at least, if in an access of Spring fever I decide to abandon my merry bachelorhood and lay siege to somebody's heart, I know how to set about it. It will have, I think, to be Miss Entwhistle. Has she, I wonder, a *dot*, that frog word that the Victorians, thinking it vulgar to discuss cash, found so useful when avoiding 'dowry'? In many ways we are well suited, being both in the first fine careless flush of old-age pensionry. She is a great church-goer and has the distinction of being, against the strongest of oppositions, by far the village's worst lady-driver, proceeding straight down the middle of all roads at exactly 40 m.p.h., never more and certainly never less. Three accidents to date, one with a lorry. Anyway, I first alert her to the excitements that lie ahead with an anonymous posy of sweet-scented violets ('You are the queen of coquettes') and soon after these I show my hand with a gift of ranunculus ('I am dazzled by your charms'). It is only fair to let people know just what they are in for and so a warning follows in the shape of some autumn crocuses ('My best days are past'), but then it's back to carefree jollity with jonquils ('I desire a return of affection'), kingcups ('I wish I were rich', and a subtle hint that now is the moment for her to reveal details, if any, of her *dot*) and some rosemary ('Your presence revives me').

When bringing flower gifts actually to Miss Entwhistle's door, rather than getting them kindly delivered, along with two pounds of scragend, by the butcher's boy, I must be extremely careful. There is a code of presentation to be mastered and learnt by heart, otherwise unfortunate disasters follow. If, for example, I feel in jocular mood and hand in a branch or two of the handsome bladder nut tree (Frivolity), I must take care that this pleasing offering is in an upright position. If my hand slips and the bladder nuts (formerly much prized by Catholics as rosary beads) hang downwards, it means the very opposite of frivolity (heaviness? ominous solemnity?). Now, if Miss Entwhistle too is herself onto all this mumbo-jumbo and immediately plunges the bladder nuts into her hair (greyish, with bun), it means, as well it might, 'caution'. If she places them reverently in her cleavage, it indicates, and I should hope so too, 'friendship'. If she hands the branches back upside down, she is saying 'hope no more', and then, in despair, I 'fling away impetuously' from her, as in novelettes, and go and throw myself into the Teign, choosing one of the few places where you can't, most of the year, wade across. On the other hand, I might decide instead to return to 'Myrtlebank' and munch a generous portion of cranberry pie (Cure for heartache). And I utterly decline, incidentally, to discuss the meanings of the many plants that possess outstandingly disagreeable names, such as Clotbur, Mugwort, Wolfsbane, Cudweed and Quamoclit (Busybody).

Roger Woddis

Frightened Lady

Mrs Sally Oppenheim, Conservative spokesman on prices and consumer affairs, has accused the Price Commission of operating a 'reign of terror'.

Of all the female pachyderms
There's none like Tory Sally:
She is the darling of the firms
With whom she is so pally.

Yet evil done less by design
Than bureaucratic error
Sends shivers down her slender spine
And leaves her numb with terror.

Of all the fallen angels thrown
To bottomless perdition,
The darkest are the Devil's own
Who staff the Price Commission.

Their Mafia thrives on companies
Sustaining heavy losses,
The cause of Sally's trembling knees
And suicidal bosses.

Of all the rights that we possess
There's one that's most forgotten:
The right to walk in righteousness
And rob the public rotten.

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Letters to the Editor

Involved in Ireland

Sir, While I admire the sentiments that lay, somewhere, behind your leader 'Mr Lynch's Apple Cart' (NS 13 January), some of the specific points that you make are based on half-truths that do little to clarify Mr Lynch's motives; they would, I imagine, be questioned by Mary Holland, who has so ably reported on Irish developments for NS in the past.

The remark that 'Mr Lynch was out to make trouble' is not a perspicacious one. His speech was prompted perhaps by the fact that he has ignored, since his resumption of office, the 'national dimension' that formed a large part of the Fianna Fail election manifesto; but also perhaps because of the fact that, as head of government of the state to which half a million Catholic 'British subjects' in Northern Ireland have given loyalty and have looked for support, Mr Lynch felt that he had a right and a duty to make the views of his Government known. This is an important point, forgotten by the British press and by Mr Mason; Mr Lynch, or indeed any Irish politician, would find it extremely difficult to ignore a situation where something like 15,000 soldiers of a foreign power are in effect occupying part of the territory over which the Irish Government claims jurisdiction. Such an interpretation is one very unfamiliar to British ears, for so long now used to hearing of the peace-keeping role of the Army in the North. It is an interpretation, however, which a great many people in the 26 counties, by no means all IRA men, accept as valid and which they feel should at least be aired by their elected representatives.

As for your two 'radically different' reasons for the continuing British presence in Ireland, neither holds much water. Surely the desire to maintain the integrity of the UK was first abjured by the Unionists themselves, when they decided that the partition of Ireland was the only way of continuing their sordid Ascendancy? Secondly, British administrations in the past have had few qualms about surrendering the local colonial populace to 'ancestral and atavistic factions' – India and Palestine being cases in point. In reality, Britain's continuing involvement in Ireland is the result of a persistent historical preference for the soft option, the latest example of which is the mixture of military repression and political vacillation instead of a bold political initiative. Any attempt to glorify this history of makeshift stumblings with the title of 'policy' is helping to maintain the Protestant illusion, i.e. that Britain really cares about their fate and will ultimately defend their position. This is the psychological crutch of Protestantism which perpetuates Britain's entanglement, and which can only be removed when the British Government recognises the truth of Mr Lynch's argument, and makes a firm commitment to withdraw. To deny even the possibility of such a step is to condemn Northern Ireland to periodic spasms of bloody civil war. Your leader eventually reaches this conclusion, but with a hamfistedness at least equal to that of Mr Lynch.

FRANK M. KANE

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Editor in Excelsis

Sir, You call it a profile of Conor Cruise O'Brien (NS 13 January); I'd call it a parody and I'll bet you had to search around to find a Provo literate enough to stitch it together. According to this version, Dr O'Brien is a reactionary because he stopped Provo propagandists from using the Irish Government controlled broadcasting services. It is forgotten that in this he had the backing of Mr Cosgrave and of Dr Garret FitzGerald, now leader of the Dail Opposition, and, now that he is head of the Government, of Mr Jack Lynch who has continued the ban on the Provos and their more obvious fellow-travellers. As for Bernard Levin's support of Dr O'Brien, readers of *The Times* were left in no doubt at the time that Dr O'Brien pleaded to be saved from such friends' excesses.

Other points are more easily answered: there are no grounds for stating that Dr O'Brien was elected to the Irish Senate by the Protestant *alumni* of Trinity College, Dublin; a majority of the *alumni* these days are almost certainly Catholic. But what has religion to do with it? The majority are certainly Irish. If Dr O'Brien now has the support, or at any rate is not opposed by the 'stetson-hatted and Texan-hearted Robert O. Anderson', the owner of the *Observer*, what's the fuss about? It does not mean that Dr O'Brien has changed; it could mean a change of hat and heart by Mr Anderson who, by the way, was not such a demon when he stepped in to save the *Observer*.

The real losers in all this are the Irish people and their sad message to the *Observer* is precisely the message sent by friends of mine from Montreal in 1969. It was a time when Dr O'Brien had been offered the vice-chancellorship of Sir George Williams University (now merged with Loyola into Concordia University). He had said he would accept if he were not elected to the Dail. When news of his election came through they sent a two-word cable: 'Congratulations alas.' Montreal by a victory and Dublin by a defeat lost their Wilkes for Liberty.

DERMOT MCEVOY

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Foxrock, Co. Dublin

Front in the West

Sir, The short appraisal of the National Front's recent growth in the West country (NS 13 January) seemed both accurate and interesting. However, Patrick Wintour and John Hughes concluded wrongly by implying that the Conservatives in the region may dilute or even dissolve the impact of the NF. The independence of the rural squirearchy in the West country is such that their Conservatism begins with Sir Keith Joseph and ends somewhere much further to the Right. They *vote* Tory, but not because they like the candidates' politics (West country Tory MPs are not always strong right-wingers, though they occasionally make the right noises to appease the gentry). Instead, West country gentlemen vote Tory because until recently they have had no alternatives; now, the National Front has provided just that alternative. The squirearchy also tends to dominate the local press in rural areas (worked often by the backwoodsmen of British journalism) and this has helped much in the growth of the NF. Even in the urban centre of the region, Plymouth, John Tyndall and company have been the toast of local radio, television and press.

As a result even in a reactionary area such as Devon and Cornwall, the answer to the NF lies with the broad Labour movement, and not with the Tories. As the Wintour/Hughes article stated, Tyndall's visit to Plymouth last year was a failure – his meeting had to be held 30 miles away, in front of an invited audience at an undisclosed venue. The reason for this was not the local Tory branches, but lay with a broad left-wing movement, who formed an anti-racist committee, organised street petitions and demonstrated, and battled as best they could against a hostile local press. So in the West country, just as elsewhere, the struggle against racism is very much a job for the Labour movement. With elements of the Tory party using immigration as a vote-winner, and some giving hospitality to relics of the Waffen SS, it could hardly be any other way.

GRAHAM NORWOOD

Press Officer
Plymouth Anti-Fascist Committee
Plymouth

Natural Justice in Northampton

Sir, Crucifer's concern (London Diary, 13 January) that natural justice was not served when, on 7 March, a meeting of Park Ward Branch of Northampton North Labour Party initiated a move not to re-adopt Ms Colquhoun may be allayed by a consideration of the facts. The grounds on which the appeals committee appear to have recommended allowing Ms Colquhoun's appeal are that the motion did not appear on the notice of that meeting. On 7 March 12 members were present. At the next meeting, at which the matter was reported, 18 people were present, of whom nine had not been present at the previous meeting. No one criticised the action taken on 7 March. Certainly, if a binding decision could have been taken on that day, not to have circulated the motion would have been unacceptable. However, the Labour Party's censure procedure is, rightly, a laborious one and at the initial branch meeting no discussion of the substance of the motion is allowed. It is only after special meetings of the Executive Committee and the General Management Committee, to decide whether or not the matter may be considered, that the motion is returned to branches for discussion and briefing of delegates before the final vote is taken at a special meeting of the GMC. At Park Ward's special meeting on 5 September 26 members were present and voted unanimously for the motion.

From this it will be seen that failure to inform the members of Park Ward of the motion before 7 March made no difference to the final outcome. There was, therefore, no breach of natural justice. The matter of non-circulation of the motion was not 'brushed aside'. It was discussed by the GMC on 21 April, with Ms Colquhoun present, and even supporters of Ms Colquhoun agreed that there had been no breach of the rules. The regional organiser did 'spot' the fact that the motion was not circulated with the notice, but gave his opinion that the procedure on 7 March was constitutionally proper and correct.

SHEILA GARNETT

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Northampton

Sir, Your comment in the London Diary (NS 13 January) on the Mureen Colquhoun case that *Labour Weekly* appeared anxious only

SEX PROBLEMS?

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to insult her, is completely unfounded and cannot possibly be justified by our coverage. We have reported *both sides* in this difficult dispute fairly and fully, which unfortunately is more than can be said for the NEW STATESMAN.

DONALD H. ROSS
Editor

Labour Weekly
Transport House
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London SW1

Middle Road in Persia

Sir, In a society like that of Iran, which has made a lyric leap between feudalism and modernity in a relatively short time, it is hardly surprising that tensions such as those described in 'Stirrings in a Persian Garden' (NS 6 January) are the concomitants of so profound and so swift a transition. Indeed, it would be surprising if there were not contradictory pressures at play, given the convoluted morphology of Iranian society in which benighted religious atavists, still picking at the bones of a feudal past, compete with a band of leftist extremists in an attempt to dismantle the achievements Iran has won in the past decade and which has placed her abreast of some of the most advanced countries of the world.

Contrary to the impressions left by the author of the article, neither group represents the people of Iran. They represent only their own narrow selfish and doctrinaire interests which are incompatible with those of the vast majority of Iranians, who reject the use of violence, anarchy and political intrigue as legitimate tools of political persuasion. In a political arena poisoned by the effusions of both left and right-wing extremists, *cui bono*? In the end, anarchy is no freedom – public order must prevail.

The likes of Mr Bazargan, whose obscurantism takes the form of nostalgia for the recreation of a medieval theocratic state, will have to bear that in mind.

MORTEZA KAKHI
Press Counsellor

Imperial Iranian Embassy
London SW7

Let Dons Delight . . .

Sir, Mr Prentki (Letters 13 January) blusters, like his volume, and makes hay with a misprint (there is, of course, always a misprint). Otherwise, it's a 'mistake', is it, to call a gerontic ex-theatre critic 'a gerontic ex-theatre critic'? A 'mistake' to read the lexicographer's sentence, 'It seems to us likely that he is quoted in the *Supplement* as often as, say, Thomas Campion and John Clare are quoted in the parent work, the OED itself', as meaning that Francis Warner is thus proved to be a distinguished poet? A 'mistake' to refer to the co-author of *Lost Demesnes, Irish Landscape Gardening 1660-1845* as a landscape gardener by way of shorthand label? A 'mistake' to call Professor Bushrui, who took refuge in Oxford while Beirut burned, a 'refugee professor'?

A critic, Prentki doesn't appear to realise, can be 'feeble' (even when distinguished by being in a volume edited by him) whether she's a Professor at Umeå (where?) or on *The Times* or the staff of the *OED* or wherever. But Prentki knows. He 'happens to know' I've seen none of Warner's plays. Oh no he doesn't know that. He's bluffing. 'Your readers should know that Cunningham is one of Mr Warner's younger colleagues. Being new . . .' Nine years in the same faculty begin, I can tell him, to feel distinctly un-novel. I confuse 'scholarship with publicity' (*I* do!). What about: 'But oh, how I wish I could see the Warner trilogy presented after really adequate rehearsal time, on a revolving stage . . . at once Francis Warner would achieve the universal acclaim for his unique contribution to modern drama that he so truly merits.' Like I said: publicity.

I suspect, though, that facts staring the rest of us in the eye scarcely manage to strike Prentki at all. His idea of meeting the objection that it's absurd to behave as though Warner's stuff is as good as Beckett's or Eliot's is to make comparisons with Beckett and Eliot. Or as one of Prentki's hacks puts it: 'if asked what it's like to be in a Warner play, one finds oneself saying "Great", a term that could equally well be used to describe Francis himself.'

VALENTINE CUNNINGHAM
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Noise at Hastings

Sir, I am delighted to have the opportunity of replying to Mr Golombek's points (Letters 13 January) and explaining the motives which lay behind the comments I made in my column (NS 6 January).

First, the 'overpitched tone' of my article. None of the points I made are new. All have been raised before and ignored. Consequently the provocative tone was deliberate and designed to produce some response. Hastings is yearly falling further and further behind the rest of the world, and seems to me to have lost all sense of purpose. The organisers' attitude appears to be 'if it's December it must be Hastings!' It seems that they have been organising the tournament for so long that they no longer remember why they do it. Hastings is most certainly not the top-class event it was 40 years ago, and never will be while they insist on building on the same rotting foundations.

Mr Golombek has clearly not read my article very carefully. He makes the point that '. . . of the 24 (Grandmasters) from Western Europe no less than 22 have appeared at Hastings'. May I repeat the relevant passage from my column: 'I have confined my survey to GMs since aspiring IMs and others must accept whatever invitations come their way to have a chance of the higher title. Thus several leading W. European players have appeared at Hastings as IMs but not as GMs.' I have consulted the records and of Mr Golombek's 22 only eight were GMs at the time and one, Pachman, now domiciled in West Germany, was representing Czechoslovakia. This reduces the total to seven, including the present writer, in almost 30 years. I hope my research is accurate. Most of the facts have been taken from that excellent book *Encyclopedia of Chess* edited by H. Golombek. In the last five years the East-West score is 24-3, not so much a 'natural majority' as a monopoly. As to whether the 'vast majority would be very glad to come again' I very much doubt it. However, I can easily be proved wrong. Let the organisers invite some, and if the 'vast majority' accept I will gladly apologise. But presumably such invitations have been sent every year.

Regarding playing conditions Mr Golombek says Hastings 'compares well . . . being marginally inferior to those in Switzerland and Holland and much superior to those in Yugoslavia and Spain'. In the first case the margin is a very wide one indeed, and the second is just not true in my experience. Hastings conditions have long been a sick joke in international chess circles. It would be easy to fill this page with quotes, but I will content myself with a few that are readily available:

'. . . the Hoogoven tournament (Holland) which follows Hastings and is now completely eclipsing it in quality, quantity and everything else . . .' (B. H. Wood in *Chess*).

'Bad playing conditions seem to be part of the tradition' (Bent Larsen in *Canadian Chess Chat*).

And last but not least:

'It is safe to say that nowhere in the world nowadays is a tournament of this standard conducted in worse playing conditions' (H. Golombek in *The Times*).

TONY MILES
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No Rebuke

Sir, In your issue of the 6 January you publish an article by Mr Christopher Price which takes the form of an open letter to Sir Harry Fisher. In that article Mr Price refers to a 'rebuke' which he says that Sir Harry received from Hailsham on the occasion of his resignation from the judicial bench. Sir Harry Fisher received no rebuke from me. He was entitled to resign and he did resign. I tried, in a private conversation, to make him alter his mind, because in my opinion he was a good judge and a loss to the bench. I failed in my endeavour.

I do wish people would stop using your columns as a means of telling lies about me even in a parenthesis. This is not the first time, or the worst. But as Sir Harry Fisher is and remains, a friend of mine, I hope you will at least publish this disclaimer.

Whether I approved of his decision to resign is another matter and entirely my own business, as his adherence to his decision in the light of my persuasion was entirely his.

HAILSHAM
House of Lords
London SW1

Donald Woods

Sir, Crucifer is incorrect (London Diary, 13 January) to suggest that the Radio 4 profile of Donald Woods leaned on a NS article by Roger Omond, one of Woods's colleagues on the *Daily Dispatch*. In making the programme we spoke to numerous people, ranging from the paper's new editor, George Farr, to the Chief Minister of the Transkei, Kaizer Matanzima, and it was chiefly on the information supplied by them that the programme was based. Most agreed that Woods is a remarkably buoyant and cheerful character, moderate in his views and conservative in some of his attitudes. Farr made the point that Woods chose his staff members extremely well. Having now read Mr Omond's article, I can see that he is clearly one of the courageous and articulate colleagues Woods has left behind in East London to continue the battle against racial injustice.

ALEXANDER MACLEOD
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BOOKS IN GENERAL

V. S. Pritchett

Hedgehogs and Foxes

Russian Thinkers by ISAIAH BERLIN *Hogarth Press* £6.95

At our encounter with the astonishing outburst of genius in Russian novels and reminiscences of the 19th century, we come under the spell of its spontaneity and spaciousness. Free of plot-time, human beings are seen floating their lives carelessly in the moods of the hours of the day yet dramatising their relationship with Russia itself. They become gripped by a nostalgia for the future, tormented by absolute ideas. Once these Russians have an idea in their heads they push it to extremes: this excites us at first; presently we feel claustrophobia. In the West, we say, we have long ago grown out of feudalism and despotism; we have had our Renaissance. On second thoughts, doubts disturb us. It strikes us that we may be slipping back into the predicaments in which a Turgenev, a Herzen, a Bakunin, a Dostoevsky or Tolstoy found himself.

Of this subject, in his essays on political thought in Europe, Isaiah Berlin has a masterly grasp. He is one of the most concerned liberal minds in Europe: he can be said to have reconnected the English reader – so suspicious of abstractions – with European thought. He is a philosopher and historian who has an unmatched and intimate knowledge of the changes of the Russian experience in its relation to the West and has deeply enriched our understanding of it. He is an expositor of large resources and clarity whose prose carries his scholarship on a swift and spirited conversational stream, out of which ideas and the people and events contained in them spring to life.

Peripatetics of rapid, encyclopedic mind, like Sir Isaiah's, are apt to scatter their learning in lectures and learned reviews or an occasional short book; it is therefore good to have the first of four volumes of his collected utterances and writings. There is a thoughtful introduction by Aileen Kelly. The present volume opens with a discussion of the Russian reaction to the failure of the revolution of 1848, reprints 'The Hedgehog and The Fox' and then proceeds to German Romanticism in Petersburg and Moscow, to the dramatic rise of an intelligentsia, goes on to studies of Belinsky, Herzen, Bakunin, populism, and reprints the crucial analysis of Turgenev's *Fathers and Children*. As Miss Kelly says, these must be read in the light of Sir Isaiah's central preoccupation,

> the exploration of what he sees as one of the most fundamental of the open issues on which men's moral conduct depends: are all absolute values ultimately compatible with one another, or is there no single solution to the problem of how to live, no one objective and universal human ideal?

He is, as she says, a liberal and a pluralist but a tough one: he rejects the view that all conflicts of values can be finally resolved by synthesis and that all desirable goals can be reconciled by moderation or the golden mean. Moral dilemmas may involve making 'agonising choices' between incompatible but equally desirable ends. The Russian writers he discusses 'lived through' these questions in torment and often in despair. The startling question that Turgenev's characters put to one another the instant they meet ('What are your convictions?'), the tendency to challenge as if to hesitate were cowardice in the pursuit of truth, are not eccentricities: they are compulsions. Are you a pluralist fox who knows many things or a monist hedgehog who knows only one? The essay on Tolstoy, 'The Hedgehog and The Fox', with its fascinating analysis of his underground link with another fox, Joseph de Maistre, the reactionary opposite with whom Tolstoy seems to share a common nihilism – a matter little known to the general English reader – is the most substantial and moving in the book. Tolstoy

> died in agony, oppressed by the burden of his intellectual infallibility and his sense of perpetual moral error: the greatest of those who can neither reconcile, nor leave unreconciled, the conflict of what there is with what there ought to be.

He was torn between passionate desire for a monistic vision of life and the cunning resources of his realism.

The disillusion of the Russian idealists with Europe began after the failure of the revolution of 1848. The event was remote and affected Russia materially or politically scarcely at all – beyond frightening the Tsar, holding up agrarian reforms, and strengthening censorship. Only the handful of intellectuals whose minds had been formed by the Enlightenment and German Romanticism were affected. (In one of his many provocative asides, Sir Isaiah remarks that scarcely one single social or political idea current in 19th-century Russia was born on native soil: perhaps Tolstoy's idea of non-resistance was genuinely Russian, 'a restatement of a Christian position so original that it had the force of a new idea when he preached it'.) The truly indigenous invention was the word 'intelligentsia' which has since captivated the world. Its meaning is commonly perverted. The intelligentsia are not simply intellectuals. They were imbued with the political and social urge to drag Russia out of the middle ages. (Another of Sir Isaiah's asides sharpens their dilemma when he says that 'they had to wait until 1905 before they got their revolution of 1848'.) They thought of themselves as a dedicated secular brotherhood whose quarrels passed through reformist, schismatic, populist, utilitarian and finally revolutionary phases. They judged all imaginative writers by their whole social tendency both as men and as artists: the great Russian novelists were born as men with the moral obligation to speak their truth about the society they lived in and were fiercely judged by their rival ideologues.

This long essay is of great importance because social commitment became a demand when it was exported to left-wing groups outside Russia. Yet, in its origins, the Russian feeling for commitment – 'Man is one and what he does he does with his whole personality' – is at the heart of the Romantic attitude. Tolstoy followed this idea to its extreme. The case of the liberal 'apolitical' Turgenev is more instructive. He is

> commonly thought of as the most Western among Russian writers, a man who believed in the pure and independent nature of art more than, say, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, [and] who consciously and deliberately avoided moralising in his novels and was indeed sternly called to order by other Russian authors for an excessive – and, it was indicated, regrettably Western – preoccupation with aesthetic principle, for devoting too much time and attention to the mere form and style of his works, for insufficient probing into the deep moral and spiritual essence of his characters – even the 'aesthetic' Turgenev is wholly committed to the belief that social and moral problems are the central issues of life and art, and that they are intelligible only in their specific historical and ideological context.

(Indeed, in common with Stendhal, he likes to put a date and a history to the 'convictions' of his chief characters.) The rise of utilitarianism later on in the century was directed by men 'of far duller and cruder minds'.

For ourselves the most satisfying quality of Isaiah Berlin's mind is its agility and ubiquity. He gets to the roots of the temperaments and beliefs of his subjects and rescues them from the merely personal aspects of biography or the academic literary criticism by which the English reader usually knows them; he sees the long shadows their ideas extend into the present day. In this last respect the essays on Bakunin and Herzen are the most cogent. Bakunin, like many utopians and revolutionaries, was fundamentally destructive: he was willing to destroy the whole world for the benefit of a new one which would arise spontaneously from the ashes. He had no notion that bad means corrupt good ends. His mind is essentially frivolous, destructive in eloquence, a mixturé of analytical acuteness and exhibitionism 'carrying with superb unconcern the multicolour heritage of the 18th century'. He liked to call himself 'the Russian Bear': he was really the incurable, even laughing high-spirited adventurer,

> without a fresh thought and not an authentic emotion, morally careless, intellectually irresponsible, a man who, with his love for humanity in the abstract, was prepared to wade through seas of blood; and thereby constitutes a link in the tradition of cynical terrorism and unconcern for individual human beings, the practice of which is the main contribution of our century thus far to political thought.

Very far from 'the lovable Bear' – far

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closer to Stavrogin, though that was Dostoevsky's caricature; far more outrageous in scale – and more courageous – than Turgenev's merely plausible and finally dilapidated tutor, Rudin.

The friendship between Bakunin and Herzen, a thinker of the highest order, is an example of the Russian 19th century's liberal tolerance of reckless company. They shared the belief in liberty, but in Herzen the belief in liberty was a solid, argued conviction, not a mere banner or a barricade. He realised that general and abstract terms like 'liberty' and 'equality' unless they were 'translated into specific terms applicable to actual situations were likely, at best, to stir the political imagination and inspire men with generous sentiments, at worst to justify stupidities and crimes', as Isaiah Berlin puts it.

Herzen possessed in high degree 'one of the elements in political genius . . . a sensibility to characteristics and processes in society while they are still in embryo and invisible to the naked eye'. His attitudes to revolution, to liberalism and conservatism are ambivalent but, if he switches his war against abstractions from one point to another, he is always committed. Of all the minds and temperaments discussed in these essays and lectures, Herzen, I suppose, is the one who comes closest to Isaiah Berlin's imagination and to his feeling for the tough pluralism which has enabled him to bring the Russian thinkers to our door where we now face a world as exposed as theirs.

Peter Conrad

Nature's Technocrat

The Human Situation: The Lectures at Santa Barbara by ALDOUS HUXLEY *Chatto & Windus* £4.95

Aldous Huxley was an ecumenical Victorian born too late. These lectures, delivered at the University of California in 1959, recall admiringly the omnific intelligence of 'my grandfather, T. H. Huxley . . . who was never happy unless he was doing three or four full-time jobs at once'; but Victorian sages were at least dealing with a world in which knowledge was humane, and the disability of Aldous Huxley's efforts here to fabricate from his own multicamerate intelligence a world-order – which would integrate education and connect remote specialisms – is that knowledge has become technical, and the wise man must accordingly turn into an engineer. Huxley, in proposing himself as a '*pontifex*, a bridge-builder', whose mind stretches across the gap between art and science, destroyed the most valuable quality of that mind, its lurid, freakish, alarming imagination. He became, as he says here, an omnicompetent 'man of letters'; but in the process he sacrificed his literary gift. For all their mental virtuosity and resourceful optimism, the lectures in *The Human Situation* are distressing, because they reveal the Huxley who was, earlier in his career, a strange hybrid of satirist and mystic, turning into a technocrat.

Huxley acknowledged that the tendency of his novels was to transform satiric disgust into mystical enlightenment: the mordant sceptics of *Those Barren Leaves* slump at the foot of the cross; the satiric California of *After Many a Summer* is a junky geriatric hell but also a mystical paradise in which death has been cosmetically abolished. Satire is undone by technology: as Huxley complained, hygiene and medical reform have redeemed the foul human body which was the satirist's subject, and the domestic comforts of bourgeois civilisation indulge that body rather than scourging it. The idyllic cemeteries of California even deprive the satirist of his ultimate sanction by making death into a euphemism. Huxley's conversion to spirituality, coinciding with residence in America, is also a conversion to technology, which not only refutes satire by freeing us from shaming physical nature but makes mystics of us by endowing us with the means to create paradise. Huxley's heaven is a chemical compound, synthesised in a laboratory. *Island* gives the formula: 'paradise . . . is symtrinitopsi-butyl toluene, with an assortment of organic impurities.'

The vision-inducing drugs which Huxley extols in these lectures are a celestial technology, devices for rapidly transporting the earthling into regions of hallucinogenic ecstacy. Mysticism is not a spiritual aptitude but a scientific technique, a 'method of changing body chemistry'; embarked on an acid trip, the subject is like an electrical appliance 'plugged in' or 'turned on' to what Huxley calls 'unstructured transpersonal consciousness'. The prodigies of parapsychology, credulously written up in one of the lectures, are a similar case of mental technology: telepathy is a miracle electronically institutionalised by the telephone. Even the march of mind is now a matter not of solitary intellectual heroism but of pharmacological adjustment: Huxley reports cheerily that Soviet chemists are brewing elixirs 'for increasing mental efficiency and endurance', apparently unaware that he is enrolling as a citizen of his own brave new world, a sinister subliminal dictatorship.

The satirist in Huxley capitulates to the technocrat, who sanitises the putrescent body; the mystic likewise surrenders, because the technocrat offers instant transcendence to the yearning mind, extracting religious experience from the secretions of cacti or sacred mushrooms. The vaunted human situation has, in the process, lost its humanity. Early in these lectures, Huxley quotes Shakespeare's phrase about time's need for a stop, the motto of one of his novels, and says that it suggests to him 'an entire philosophy'. Each of Huxley's literary selves has a different way of stopping time. The satirist halts it by force, consigning characters to a premature Armageddon: hence the assassinations in *Point Counter Point*, and the reduction of Webley's corpse to an exhalation of noxious gases. The mystic stops time by floating out of it: we all spend a third of our existences in this charmed state, Huxley argues, because sleep is our daily liberation from the constraints of space and the lassitude of time. But the technocrat neither makes time viciously foreclose, like the satirist, nor dreamily eludes it, like the mystic, but alters its mechanism.

Time will thus drift entropically on towards dissolution, Huxley says, unless technology intervenes to accelerate it – not (like satire) to hasten the approach of death, but to equip us with powers of survival which otherwise we could not discover soon enough to avert disaster. *The Human Situation* therefore confidently predicts advances in population control, food production and irrigation whereby technology will rescue a congested and depleted planet.

Human fate has been transferred from human beings to a caste of technological wizards – researchers into radiation chemistry, psychopharmacology and eugenics – who will save us from ourselves by making beneficent changes to our species and to the nature on which we prey. Technocracy extends its role to art, and *The Human Situation* incidentally reveals the reason for Huxley's inability to continue as a novelist. His early novels aren't about characters in action but about ideas contrapuntally interwoven; the later novels have turned characters from ideas into particles, chemical formulae. The trollopy Virginia in *After Many a Summer* relaxes into the vegetative contentment of the body, happy to escape a wearisome individuality; drugs unmake character in *Island*: William Asquith Farnaby ceases to be a person, and evaporates into a luminous, vacuous state of awareness. Huxley chemically decomposes character. The satiric decay whereby the saprophytic bacteria turn what was once Webley into a pool of chemical deposits becomes now an intelligible scientific discipline.

Discussing 'the problem of human nature' in these lectures, Huxley virtually denies that a human nature exists. The satirist's contempt for human nature and the mystic's indifference to it come to the aid of the technocrat, whose bland analytical procedures turn sloppy, quarrelsome human beings into sleek, identical test-tube babies. For Huxley now, personality is just a snarl of symbiotic complexes. Consciousness is chemical, an endocrine event, regulated by the level of adrenalin. Intelligence is physiological (Huxley marvels at the parrot's ability to mimic human voices), or else serenely detaches itself both from the body and the reason (Huxley is also amazed by 'calculating boys', who precociously produce elaborate cube roots from the air and have a genius for computation quite separate from straightforward ratiocinative power).

Character is resolved into its physical constituents. Among the pseudo-scientific systems to which Huxley adhered was Sheldon's temperamental typology, a reduction

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of individuals to a triad of physical types: gutsy and genial endomorphs, musclebound power-mad mesomorphs, and prickly cerebral ectomorphs. Huxley even removes Mme Bovary from the novel to the psychiatrist's consulting-room, turning her too-ardent imagination into a clinical symptom, a 'Bovaric angle' which can be measured by the analyst: 'some people have Bovaric angles of 90 degrees, and some even of 180.'

Having resolved character into a metaphysical error, a 'dark little inspissated clot' which absurdly imagines itself to be an individual identity, Huxley goes on to disestablish narrative and language. Both are preconscious vestiges of the race's infancy, with which the angelic technology of the future can dispense. 'The story-telling faculty' is a misuse of intelligence, garrulously prattling on and making existence into 'a kind of endless serial' which will keep schoolboys awake but shouldn't bemuse enlightened adults. Words are also a casualty of evolution, relics of a pre-scientific understanding which could only bring the insentient objects of the world under human rule by assigning names to them. Language is the instrument of our imperialism, to be disowned now that science has revealed the world to be 'refreshingly other', indifferent to human sentiment and best described not by words but by numbers, formulae and equations.

For Huxley detests the 'awful humanisation of nature' which is the subject of much art: just as novelists rearrange random bundles of atoms into the semblance of logical beings, so poets lyingly annex the external world to their own emotions, empathising cosily with landscapes, like Wordsworth, or else, like the allegorical botanists of the middle ages, cataloguing living things as illustrations of scriptural precepts. Most of our sorrow, Huxley says, is our puerile complaint that we are sentient creatures in a universe which is insentient; art obstructs wisdom by encouraging an anxious pathetic fallacy to colonise the void. The only art Huxley can commend is as bleak and blank as the atomised, unfeeling universe: the novels of Joyce and Lawrence, which examine psychological change under laboratory conditions; the music of Boulez, fragmenting melody into rows of tuneless notes; the painting of Jackson Pollock, refusing to represent nature but merely flecking a canvas with dribbles of paint which are themselves minimal and 'atomic elements of form'.

The satirist wants to revenge himself on the human situation, the mystic to levitate out of it; the technocrat, more chillingly, wants to reform it. He regrets its fallibility, its inefficiency, and in the end deplores its humanity: it would work so much more rationally if mechanised. Huxley betrays a similar disquiet in a phrase lamenting our 'all too human world'. Humanity for him is a kind of claustrophobia, 'a sense of being boxed in a world where everything has a suffocating feeling of humanity, instead of being other than humanity'. He longs for the visionary emptiness of the paradise within disclosed by drugs, or for the improving company of robots, pure electronic intelligences. Despite its title, this book has a grim inhumanity.

Christopher Hill

Fool's Mate

James II by MAURICE ASHLEY *Dent* £7.50

Maurice Ashley's epigraph to this book is *tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*. But in the case of James II it really isn't. I have tried very hard, and Dr Ashley has tried even harder; yet in the last resort it is impossible to absolve James II of blame. When he succeeded to the throne in 1685 Charles II had deviously but skilfully preserved the Stuart monarchy during 25 difficult years, and handed over to his brother a financially viable inheritance. Within just over three years James had wrecked the traditional English monarchy, for good. Disregarding the warnings of the Pope and English Catholics, James tried forcibly to impose Roman Catholicism on an England where protestantism was popular even if the Church of England was not. If he had played his cards more coolly, he could probably have won religious liberty for his co-religionists; after his failure it was nearly 150 years before Catholic emancipation was achieved.

James was as stupid and obstinate as his father, Charles I. But Charles redeemed himself by being pig-headed on behalf of a cause which won the support of the opinion-formers after his death, whereas James chose the hopelessly lost cause (in England) of Catholicism. Charles positively sought martyrdom, and acted out his role with dignity; James, when given the chance of martyrdom, did not take it; he ran away, too soon, not once but three times. It was, however, extremely bad luck for the Roman church that in the first 150 years after the Reformation the two least competent English monarchs were the only two dedicated Roman Catholics – Mary I and James II. It looks as though God, in those days at least, was a protestant.

Dr Ashley does his very best to make out some sort of a case for James. But towards the end of the book he is reduced to saying, 'James no doubt was a stupid man, or at any rate a stubborn man, but . . .' In the last chapter this has become 'habitual stupidity' joined with 'weakness in times of crisis'. It is like a conscientious schoolmaster writing a testimonial for a boy who he knows is not fit for the job, but for whom he wants to do his best. James was unfortunate in succeeding the successful and witty Charles II, who summed up his brother in two memorable phrases: he 'had his mistresses given him by his priests for penance'; and 'they will never kill me, James, to make you King'. The latter at least, like so many of the Merrie Monarch's apparently light-hearted epigrams, was a serious and accurate political judgment. Those who were most hostile to Charles disliked and feared James even more.

Dr Ashley's scholarship is impeccable, and he has done an excellent job, combing the manuscripts sources thoroughly. He reminds us, pertinently, that James 'was handi-

About Oxford books

500 years old

In 1978 the Oxford University Press is celebrating the quincentenary of printing in Oxford. In 1478, only two years after Caxton had set up his press in Westminster, another printer, Theodoric Rood, came from Cologne to start printing in Oxford. In the 500 years since then, O.U.P. has grown into a large international publishing house, with branches in twenty countries. Our catalogues list a total of over 17,000 books and music items. We publish about 800 new titles a year. The Press is a department of the University of Oxford, and its aims are essentially those of the University itself: academic, educational, and cultural.

OUP people

The long history of the Press is very largely the story of the men who served it. In **The Oxford University Press: An Informal History**, to be published in March at £6.75, Peter Sutcliffe writes engagingly and revealingly about them. ' "He was really very odd", is the final verdict of the oral tradition on many of the personalities who contributed to the history of the Press in the earlier years of this century. Milford (Sir Humphrey Milford, the London Publisher) became odder as he grew older. Chapman (R. W. Chapman, the Secretary to the Delegates) qualified perhaps from the start for this accolade, though he too grew odder as the years passed. He was a tall, shambling, awkward man, the reverse of nimble. His blacksmith-built bicycle became famous in Oxford, his mysterious dogmatic hand-signals even more so. On turning into Walton Street on his daily journey to the press he would immediately occupy the middle of the road, his right arm rigidly outstretched. The ultimate intention was clear, the exact timing difficult to ascertain, for he still had a hundred yards to go. (Milford preferred being driven about London in a Studebaker, at a time when American cars in Britain were rare.)'

Starting the next 500

Peter Sutcliffe's book heads a Spring list that is even more than usually full of interesting books. **The Oxford University Press and the Spread of Learning**, by Nicolas Barker, £10, is a magnificent pictorial history. **The Oxford Book of Oxford**, edited by Jan Morris, £5.95, celebrates the University from its beginnings in the Middle Ages up to 1945; and there is a new edition of her classic, **Oxford**, £6 or £2.50 in Oxford Paperbacks. Kingsley Amis has edited **The New Oxford Book of Light Verse**, a collection markedly different from W. H. Auden's, published in 1938; lighter in heart and closer to our modern understanding of what 'light' means. New paperback editions of Ved Mehta's moving autobiography, **Face to Face**, and Isaiah Berlin's **Karl Marx** are also coming, £1.95 each.

'The survival of large institutions', writes Peter Sutcliffe, 'is abnormal. This one has often appeared a little ramshackle. Yet not only did it survive: for over a century it has been in a state of continuous growth both at home and overseas. In what might be regarded as its old age, the process continues.'

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capped, as his father had been, by a slight stutter'. Dr Ashley argues that James 'had always been . . . a believer in liberty of conscience for all'. It is possible; but James may have come to realise that he had no hope of catholicising England without the support of protestant dissenters against the Church of England and the gentry whom the House of Commons represented. Charles II had tried a similar tactic, but never pushed it so dangerously far as James, who ruined himself by depriving the gentry of their control of local government and handing it over to papists and lower-class dissenters. James's readiness to authorise and watch the torture of Scottish Covenanters ('the evidence that he actually enjoyed such a spectacle is slight'), and his approval of Judge Jeffreys's conduct of the Bloody Assizes after Monmouth's Rebellion, do not suggest great respect for other people's opinions. Dr Ashley argues not implausibly that James distinguished sharply between peaceful nonconformists and rebels. His relative lenience towards Quakers and his friendship with William Penn strengthen this view. By the 1680s, the Quakers had abandoned politics and become pacifists: they really practised the doctrine of passive resistance which the Church of England preached until James's actions seriously threatened its predominance.

James believed that his father and his brother had been too ready to make concessions: he had a blimpish toughness which lasted as long as it was not opposed. Typical is the story, which Dr Ashley tells very well, of James refusing to leave a sinking ship until too late: and then insisting that his personal belongings must be saved first. Servants and seamen were forcibly prevented from entering the long boat, and 150 of them were drowned. 'God be thanked,' James piously observed, 'I and most of the people of quality got off'. 'One of the least successful or effective of English monarchs' is Dr Ashley's succinct conclusion. And one of the least likeable.

James Joll

Prussian Night

Scientists under Hitler: Politics and the Physics Community in the Third Reich by ALAN D. BEYERCHEN *Yale University Press* £13.35

Each new detailed study of the realities of life in Nazi Germany shows how inadequate the concept of 'totalitarianism' is to explain what went on. The word itself was invented by Mussolini, and it served to create the myth of the all-powerful state in which every individual and every group was subject to the process of *Gleichschaltung* so that the whole would run like a smooth machine at the behest of an all-powerful Leader. In fact, for many people much of the time, life under the Nazis was not very different from life in any other society, provided always that they did not criticise the Party and its policies. People were concerned with their personal economic problems: they were worried about their professional careers and their desire to get a better job. There was still plenty of room for playing one government or party organisation against another and, in the universities, for the familiar intrigues about who should get which professorship.

Professor Beyerchen, in an interesting, scholarly and notably fair-minded book, has looked at what happened to academic physicists in the Third Reich. He is concerned with scientists rather than with science, and his book can be read with profit by people who know nothing of x-ray crystallography or excitation potentials. The physicists were an exceptional group in that a comparatively high proportion of them were forced to emigrate, mostly because they were Jewish, but also in some cases from political conviction. Those who were left in Germany were, with few exceptions, concerned with their own research and their own careers, with appointments to chairs or with securing jobs for their students. The tradition of academic scientists in Germany was a consciously unpolitical one, though many of them in their personal politics were as conservative as most other German professors. They had felt, for example, in Alan Beyerchen's words, that

> the travels of Albert Einstein abroad in the early post-war years, during which the physicist served as an instrument of Weimar foreign policy, exceeded the bounds of acceptable non-political activity.

Indeed the existence of Einstein was one of the things which made life difficult for those physicists who continued to try and make a career under Hitler. Inevitably Einstein's purely scientific activities became, in the eyes of the Nazis, coloured by his political beliefs, his Jewish origins and his steadfast opposition to National Socialism. Already, before Hitler came to power, there had been serious German physicists who had attacked Einstein's methods and theories as unGerman: and it was these critics, notably Philipp Lenard (a Nobel Prize winner) and Johannes Stark, who became under the Nazis the founders of the school of 'Aryan physicists'. An analysis of their ideas and influence forms a central theme of this book.

Their scientific beliefs stemmed partly from personal political prejudice – both men had long been extreme German nationalists – partly from pseudo-philosophical beliefs: the true German tradition was, they maintained, one based on experiment and rooted in the realities of German life, and it was this that was being threatened by a rival, specifically Jewish, tradition of abstract mathematical theorising. 'With the powerful penetration of Jews into positions of authority,' Lenard wrote,

> . . . the observation of nature itself was invalidated and lost in oblivion. Knowledge of the things of the exterior world was supposed to have its foundation in the notions of human heads.

(So much for the German idealist tradition in philosophy!) There were, of course, also genuine scientific criticisms of the theory of relativity and a certain antagonism, by no means peculiar to Germany, between experimental and theoretical physicists. The debate was already fierce in the 1920s, but the majority of physicists were prepared to accept the theory of relativity and of quantum mechanics, and their opponents would not have had any success if they had not received some official support after the Nazis came to power. Even so, the Aryan physicists eventually failed to prevail, less because their ideas did not command much professional support than because of non-scientific interdepartmental rivalry: they failed to win the backing of Rust, the Minister of Education, and placed their hopes in Rosenberg, whose influence was never very great, and in Hess, who left Germany in 1941.

The attack on contemporary physical theory and the attempt to secure the appointment to university posts of politically reliable scientists had a disastrous effect on the development of German physics. The interruption of international contacts soon began to tell: some physicists preferred to work in private industry rather than in the universities; and those in the research institutes, feeling themselves to be on the defensive, threw themselves all the more eagerly into their theoretical work. It has sometimes been suggested that the Germans' failure to develop nuclear weapons before the Allies was due to deliberate delay on moral grounds by Heisenberg and his associates in the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin. Alan Beyerchen supports the contrary view that the failure to make an atomic bomb was due to technical mistakes rather than to deliberate sabotage. At the same time, the tendency to concentrate on theory was, Beyerchen implies, a reaction against the pressure which had been put on the theoretical physicists by their professional and ideological opponents, so that they used the fact that their work was ostensibly of importance to the war effort to gain facilities to pursue their own research rather than to concentrate on a specific practical project as their colleagues who had emigrated to England or the US were doing. It seems that it was professional pride rather than political or moral resistance which determined the line they followed.

This in turn raises the question – and it is one of the many merits of Alan Beyerchen's book that it does so – of what is resistance. Or to put it more concretely, what would we have done in their place? The more senior among the German physicists were in a better position than most of their compatriots, since they could obtain posts abroad fairly easily. But younger scholars were not always so successful: Martin Stobbe, for example, one of the group of Göttingen scientists whom Beyerchen examines in detail, was not Jewish and he gave up an exchange post at Bristol so as to enable a Jewish colleague to take it, but after deciding he could not bear to stay in Germany he never succeeded in finding a permanent post abroad. However, far more

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scientists decided that emigration, with all that it implied for their families and their whole way of life, was too drastic a step, and, like many observers outside Germany, they believed the regime would either not prevail or at least not be as bad as it seemed. 'If the present university situation displeases you,' Max Planck is said to have told a colleague in 1933, 'take a vacation for a year. Go on a pleasant trip abroad. And when you return, all the unpleasant incidental phenomena of the moment will have disappeared.' Planck was indeed characteristic; as Max Born remarked:

> The Prussian tradition of service to the state and allegiance to the government was deeply rooted in him. I think he trusted that violence and oppression would subside in time and everything return to normal. He did not see that an irreversible process was going on.

German academics were proud of their status as civil servants, and it was a tradition that was hard to break. Moreover the practical facilities for work still existed. The building of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physics in Berlin was completed in 1937 with funds not only from the government but from the Rockefeller Foundation.

Two of the most distinguished scientists in Germany, Max von Laue, a man of the older generation and a Nobel prizewinner, and Werner Heisenberg, one of the most brilliant of the younger men, justified their remaining in Germany in terms of their duty to preserve the true values of German science and to maintain the continuity of a tradition by preparing for a better future. 'Above all,' von Laue wrote later, 'I wanted . . . to be there once the collapse of the Third Reich . . . allowed the possibility of a cultural reconstruction upon the ruins this Reich created.' Certainly, von Laue kept the respect of younger scholars by his independence and his consideration and respect for Jewish colleagues who stayed in Germany; and he also, unlike some of his colleagues, retained the esteem of Einstein. Heisenberg had the connections as well as the scientific reputation to continue with his work. But he was not free from attack: a major campaign was mounted to prevent his nomination to the chair of physics at Munich, and the vituperation in the SS press only ceased when his mother paid a visit to her old acquaintance Frau Himmler, the mother of the *Reichsführer* SS.

As a group, scientists did, and perhaps could do, little more than try to preserve a certain professional freedom of action, to do what they could to influence university appointments and to find areas of research which they could pursue without too much interference and with some financial support. This made life tolerable for them, but it also enabled them to be ready to make a real contribution to the reconstruction of German intellectual life after the end of the Third Reich, even if it did not hasten that end. Yet it was the fact that professional groups – or for that matter bodies like the Roman Catholic church – strove to preserve some sort of autonomy that prevented even the Third Reich from being the wholly totalitarian system its rulers proclaimed it to be. Those of us who have not yet lived under a dictatorship are in no position to say that the men and women Alan Beyerchen has studied should have done more.

Malcolm Bradbury

In Rooms Apart

Paper Tigers: The Ideal Fictions of Jorge Luis Borges by JOHN STURROCK *Oxford* £5.95

Today we live, it seems, in an age committed to fictions: an era of suspicion, a season of *as if*, a time of multiple world-views, too various to permit any consent to a single exterior reality. But, if the divine signature has gone from the world, the world still turns out to be more than contingent: indeed it is populous with signifiers and signifieds, rich in grammars, vigorous in structural coordinates. If the currency is floating, there remain, for our study, the laws of fictional exchange. Reality may be busy somewhere, but it is no longer pure, in no sense simple, and in decidedly short supply. There are those who promise us that, after Babel, it will be historically awarded to us again, wheeled in on a barrow by the victorious proletariat; evidently, though, it will need a heavy state apparatus to administer. But fictiveness seems, just now, our epistemological lot; and of this state of affairs one crucial beneficiary is evidently the writer, the guardian of the lexical playfields, the secular priest of the supreme fictions.

And, coming up fast, after a poor start, there is the novelist or story-writer, who, in the era of suspicion, turns out to command many of the essential weapons – the arts of negotiating story, the modes of structure-making, the narrative grammar of *as if*. Or they, perhaps, rather command him. For this is also an age of parody, a late time when all writing is re-writing, when all tales are told, all genres classified, and the most the writer might hope for is to permute and to purify the linguistic and structural options. Of the fictional enterprise seen in this fashion, we have a number of great modern examples; but one of the central cases is clearly Jorge Luis Borges. Borges, a great writer famous for a small stock, has of course been writing for some time, as John Sturrock sets out by reminding us in his vigorous, useful, and highly fictionalist new study, which is very much a product of this state of affairs. Though his English-language reputation came in the 1960s, and coincided with the growing fictionalist case, Borges's *oeuvre* began in the 1920s and the key stories behind his reputation, in *Ficciones* and *El Aleph*, belong to the late 1930s and 1940s. This is important because it hides a continuity; like Nabokov, that other great multi-lingual writer (as George Steiner has said, one crucial element that Nabokov, Beckett and Borges, three of our key figures, share is that they are writers 'unhoused'), Borges carries through much decadent and late symbolist lore to feed into the post-modernist synthesis.

Borges's long, hermetic isolation, not only from his English-language readers but also to some degree from his own Argentinian culture, indeed seems as much a condition of his stories as their Platonic obsession with the fictive; and Sturrock rightly takes as a prime image in his book the picture of the writer or his surrogates – his imprisoned detectives, like Parodi, his writer-scholars, like Menard, his background plotters, like Bogle – closeted in rooms apart, where one might mediate with rather than experience reality, and pass into the ludus of art, so that the ancestral laws and logics of fiction can run their course apart from contingency.

Sturrock's Borges is a neo-Platonic Borges; the fiction becomes a mode of substituting language for the world. Fiction is 'that privileged world in which everything makes sense', and Borges is the writer exploiting and exploring the privilege to its heart. Thus what he shares with a number of our best contemporary experimental writers, and especially the French *nouveaux romanciers* (on whom Sturrock has already written admirably), is the assumption that it is the duty of a particular fiction to illustrate the methods of the genre as a whole. To write on Borges is indeed to write on fiction; and it is both satisfying and appropriate that Sturrock makes his study not only a work of very profitable and well-organised readings of the central stories in the *oeuvre* but also a work in the theory of fiction itself.

One thing this does is to establish firmly what has long been obvious, that Borges is an important literary thinker as well as a creator of major texts; it also permits him to be seen in the light of various kinds of literary thinking that owe a good deal more to Paris than Buenos Aires. Without getting into the more complex reaches of contemporary work in narrative grammar, Sturrock's book does a great deal to pull the structuralist Borges elegantly into shape.

Indeed the whole book is both up-to-date and learned, in that it explores the *oeuvre* in full, makes its own translations, and recognises the detail of the cultural milieu out of which Borges comes. It is much to be recommended, and yet it is, I believe, also partial. For Borges is, I think, a dark comedian of fictions, a less than pure idealist in the cause. Contingent reality indeed needs the redemption of ideal order in his works: Funes the Memorious is laid waste by an excess of contingent reality. But plots themselves have their own ironic status; Lonnrot, in 'Death of the Compass', is destroyed by the order he makes; and, while 'The Library of Babel' may postulate for us the Book of Books, when text encompasses the world, Babel survives nonetheless. Borges may be our great modern quester for the ideal fictions; he also postulates the waste and dilapi-

Among this week's contributors:

JAMES JOLL is Stevenson Professor of International History at the London School of Economics, and the author of *Europe Since 1870* (Weidenfeld, 1973).

PETER PORTER's new collection of poems, *The Cost of Seriousness*, will be published by Oxford later this year.

CHRISTOPHER HILL's books include *The English Revolution, 1640* and *God's Englishman*.

MALCOLM BRADBURY is the editor of *The Novel Today: Contemporary Writers on Modern Fiction* (Fontana, 1977).

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dation of literature, the disorder of orders, the triumph of contingency. These are, of course, old ironies, the ironies inherent in fiction; but Borges is deep, deft and great enough to play much with these complexities, and this profitable book might well have told us more about it.

Eric Korn

Of Things To Come

H. G. Wells: A Pictorial Biography by FRANK WELLS *Jupiter Books* £4.95
H. G. Wells in the Cinema by ALAN WYKES *Jupiter Books* £5.95

There is a kind of happy untimeliness about H. G. Wells which ensures that he is never in the fashion and never out of print. Each age, especially each teen-age, claims him for its own. An illiterate book-shaped object, spun off from *Star Wars* like Luke off a laser, lists H. G. Wells as 'one of the greatest American science fiction writers . . . [who] got their starts and exposure due to Gernsback' – Hugo Gernsback, editor of *Amazing Stories* from 1926. It's nice to be remembered.

Wells is more substantially recollected by his son Frank, who claims to have done no more than 'take the contents of a box in the attic and put them in some sort of order'. He has added a year-by-year synchronicity of whimsically chosen Great Events ('1880: Gissing publishes *Workers in the Dawn*. Franchise conferred on Women in the Isle of Man. Aerated Bread Company opened first Tea Shops in London'; and had you realised that Borges was born the year *The Treasure Seekers* was published?), and a running list of publications at the foot of the page, to remind you that when Wells appears from the illustrations to be spending all his time playing trains with the author, he was actually dishing out three novels, several pamphlets, and uncountable articles: 'I like thinking about my stories, but I hate writing them; the only things that are pleasant to write are essays (but they are not nearly so pleasant to sell).'

He went nova in 1895, the year after he left poor cousin Isabel and married Jane Robbins, flinging out *The Time Machine, The Stolen Bacillus and other Stories, The Wonderful Visit* and the rather faded belle-lettrism of *Select Conversations with an Uncle (Now Extinct)*; but it would be vulgar, as well as profitless, to seek in this affable album, free as it is from hagiology, for the astrophysics of later bursts of productivity or silence. Yet there are gentle pleasures and sidelong illuminations: the prospectus of Bromley Academy – 'Geography, Sacred and Secular-Plain and Ornamental Writing – Arithmetic (logically)'; a family snap from his first teaching job, where the headmaster was A. A. Milne's father (son in fauntleroy collar, acquiring the grudge he was so spectacularly to work off on his own child); and a brief account of a party Wells organised, in an assonant mood, for Chaliapin to meet Chaplin (neither turned up; when Chaplin came to Easton Glebe, the sightseers ignored him for Harold Laski, who had a more authentic, Chaplinesque moustache). There is Wells ponderous, Wells playful, Wells prophetic; Wells with Lenin, Wells with Shirley Temple, Wells with a platypus – a fair representation of his unbounded hospitality to ideas and persons.

World events are indicated by photographs of goose-stepping troops, newspaper headlines, dates on tear-off calendars: it is the narrative technique of the film *Things to Come*, for which Frank Wells was assistant art director and for which, incidentally, he gives a wrong date. From that film I vividly recall the shock dealt to my childhood sense of the impregnable stability of sterling by a shot of a tattered newspaper, blowing across a post-Armageddon bomb-site, PRICE ONE POUND. Alan Wykes, equally vividly, remembers the shot, though he remembers the newspaper pinned to a bulletin board and priced £5 – he regrets that a still wasn't available. Memory is fallible; but the book of the film of the book (Cresset Press 1935) suggests we were both wrong – it was, eventually, four pounds, and caught on a thorn.

Wykes, in his altogether too relaxed survey of Wellsian films, does not seem to have referred to this book, for the long and interesting preface modifies Wells's quoted claim that the story was filmed exactly as he wrote it ('They were greatly excited by the general conception, but found the draft quite impracticable for production'.) Wykes attributes the music to William Walton (instead of Arthur Bliss), gives two different dates for *The Red Room*, and the earliest *Kipps*, and allows to stand an extraordinary statement in the early pages that we know nothing of Wells's attitude to the cinema in 1934, 'for despite his interest in science and gadgetry it was not until two years later that he expressed himself publicly on the cinema, apart from mentioning once or twice that some of his tales had dramatic or film possibilities'; though he is obliged successively to concede that Wells had already, in 1928, provided material for three shorts (in which Charles Laughton made his film debut), and in 1929 published *The King who was a King – The Book of the Film*. This has a lengthy and enthusiastic, if slightly thin, essay on the narrative technique of the film and the use of the film as a propaganda and educational tool. Wykes also mentions 'a film using a Wells title, *Village of the Giants*'; there is in fact no such title. (It was a half-baked *Food of the Gods*.)

But Mr Wykes has disinterred some wonderful photographs, from the blurry and doubtful *The Invisible Thief* (Pathe, 1909) to the 1977 *Island of Dr Moreau*. It is a pity that he was unable to find any stills from the 1919 *First Men in the Moon*; there are a few in a scarce booklet put out by Gaumont which suggests it was a memorable bummer – the Selenites wear papier-maché heads and look like chocolate-covered Mickey Mice, while the Grand Lunar has a gigantic spherical noggin, like Charlie Brown carved out of meringue.

Hermione Lee

Shock Horror

In Between The Sheets by IAN MCEWAN *Cape* £3.50
Turkey Hash by CRAIG NOVA *Aidan Ellis* £4.50
Double-Decker by EVA JONES *Bachmann & Turner* £4.50
In The National Interest by MARVIN KALB and TED KOPPEL *Bodley Head* £4.50

This week's novels are sporting the Tough Look – guts, wars, garbage, stiff drinks and laconic dialogue. But they go soft when set against Ian McEwan's second volume of stories. His seven elegantly gruesome accounts of derelict and perverted lives cannot be dismissed after the first *frisson*: their peculiar images of pain and loss seem, retrospectively, to grow in depth. Perhaps, since the highly acclaimed *First Love, Last Rites*, his fascination for the macabre has moved towards affectation. The earlier stories dealt with abnormality – a very fat woman, a child murderer, a boy who rapes his ten-year-old sister – but humanised with a moving and witty precision. The intention now, partly, is to push abnormality to absurdist extremes. So, we explore the plight of a pet ape, discarded as lover and confidant by his mistress, or of a millionaire businessman who falls in love with a dummy in a clothes shop, takes her home, gives her his all, suspects her with the chauffeur, rapes and kills her.

These are good jokes – the ape's polished literary style and the rich lover's explanations for his 'Helen's' perpetual silences are very funny. And they treat McEwan's favourite themes of sexual jealousy and humiliation by matching (as many of his stories do, with dire results) characters whose sensibilities and preoccupations are impossibly disparate. But there is an air of mere games-playing about these neo-Gothic pieces which is rather disappointing. The power to shock, of which McEwan is a master, is strongest in stories about *unexceptional* failures and misfits, who, with a sudden strange shift of gear in the narrative, are tipped over into unmanageable situations. 'Pornography' deals this fate to a seedy young bloke who works in his brother's porn shop in Brewer Street, has the clap, screws two nurses on alternate nights, and becomes the victim of their horrible revenge. Its controlled use of different tones, from the flatly comic treatment of the porn industry ('How many of those soddin' inflatable women did you unload? There's still 25 of the fuckers in the cellar') to the sinister erotic presentation of the nurses ('Lucy eased herself onto his belly like a vast nesting bird') is very impressive.

And though the title-story, the best in the collection, makes play with the abnormal in the 'affair' between the hero's daughter and a female dwarf, this macabre touch is necessary to the close, painful account of Stephen's guilty feelings of sexual inadequacy and loss. As in 'Two Fragments:

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March 199-', where a man struggles to have a natural relationship with his daughter in the haphazard, primitive conditions (brilliantly imagined) in an England of the future, the fragility of the father/daughter relationship is evoked in quiet, careful, startling language:

> 'Hello, Daddy,' said Miranda. 'This is Charmian, my friend.' The light was in his eyes and at first he thought they held hands, like mother and child side by side before him, illuminated from behind by the orange dying sun, waiting to be greeted. Their recent laughter seemed concealed in their silence. Stephen stood up and embraced his daughter. She felt different to the touch, stronger perhaps. She smelt unfamiliar, she had a private life at last, accountable to no one. Her bare arms were very warm.

By contrast, the agonies undergone by Craig Nova's psychotic young hero seem ludicrously overdone. The language is at the opposite extreme: so violently weltering in its subject matter that one expects bits of flesh and vomit to fall from the pages, as Miles Cabro is hurled from the joys of home-life (an epileptic mother, a sister assaulted by a mentally deficient uncle) into the outside world of sadists, gangsters and freaks. In spite of the unremitting emphasis on brutality and squalor, Miles is suspiciously reminiscent of Tom Sawyer. His funniest pranks are essentially innocent, like giving away free petrol and leaving the manager of the gas station to sort out the riot. And he is kind to pregnant women and loyal to his friends. We are meant to feel sorry for him, for all the book's pretentions to ruthlessness.

No such ambivalence colours *Double-Decker*, which has the ring of autobiography, and whose aggressive, suffering German-Jewish heroine is certainly meant to draw tears. By comparison with McEwan's finesse and Craig Nova's turgid overstatement, her narrative seems primitively unselfconscious. She rushes with cries of despair and enthusiasm at her story of wartime flight from Berlin to Paris, from the refugee camps across the mountains to Spain, from Madrid, by courtesy of a handsome English pilot, to a lifeless marriage, chequered by her frantic attempts, through yoga and Zen Buddhism, to exorcise her past. The energy and directness of the novel are endearing, though it is rather a ramshackle business, better at scenes of action than at the heroine's tedious self-examination once she is home and dry. What happens to her is more interesting than what she thinks of it.

In the National Interest, co-written by the biographer of Kissinger and the Diplomatic Correspondent of ABC News, is the novel's answer to *Washington: Behind Closed Doors*, but without that gripping programme's psychological niceties. The plot is meaty and fast, a clear history of the Middle East is provided, and the workings of a peace shuttle are laid bare with fanatical thoroughness. The novel, though, pretends to deal with what might be, not what might have been, and the joke, that Secretary of State Vandenberg is *not* Kissinger, is skilfully, if a little coyly, sustained. Kissinger himself, the blurb says, thinks it is 'a great work of fiction'. What more can one ask?

ARTS & ENTERTAIMENT

Peter Porter

Remembers Me Back

Looking in my notes and back through the *Radio Times*, I am amazed again at the number of words I absorb through the air each month, without apparent harm. If television shows us things, radio certainly tells us more about them. Of course, a good deal is opinion, not information. Through years of training, I can immediately sort out the tone of voice of someone expressing an opinion, whatever the channel. For instance, at breakfast my children's hands are on the tuner, and so we are regaled by Capital. But let the reports of pile-ups on the North Circular and the inaudible replies of phone-in contestants going for the eight-album jackpot be replaced by even the most tentative opinion from someone, expert or interviewee alike, and I am listening attentively. The men who run radio know how fond of being instructed we are: they have placed hospices for the opinionated and the opinion-conscious at intervals throughout the day's pilgrimage.

Apart from regular programmes like *Kaleidoscope*, *A Word in Edgeways*, *Any Questions*, *File on 4* and *You and Yours*, Radio 4 has a range of occasional programmes where people are encouraged to tell us what they think about things – at the moment, *Speaking for Myself*, *Conversation Piece*, *The Thirty-Years' Peace* and on and up to the *Reith Lectures*. Radio 3 goes in for more formal talks, which do not seem to buttonhole you but can be oracular enough. Sometimes they are just silly, as was the series called *The Unimportance of Being Right*, where a professor told us that the nation was wasting money on Concorde and nuclear reactors. He seemed to think that nobody had come to this conclusion before, so his talk used sarcasm of the kind many people mistake for irony. Joseph Hone, whose three talks, *The Thirty-Years Peace*, are reviewing England and its relations with the EEC, is a broadcaster of an older order. He has a well-modulated voice; he writes his talks and doesn't try to make them sound improvised; and he has something to say. Whether in a British cemetery in Passchendaele or dozing off in a supertrain beside the Lorelei, Hone makes every reference count. I have heard him reporting from Egypt and from the footplate of an Indian express, as well as from the Somerville and Ross country of his native Ireland, and he makes me nostalgic for the days of the BBC's roving correspondents – for René Cutforth and Peter Duval Smith. *Conversation Piece* last Sunday proved the ideal focus for an opinionated man. I mean Professor Eric Laithwaite no disrespect in describing him thus. He told Sue MacGregor how he came to invent the linear motor, and, in passing, gave us his formula for restoring England to top nation of the world. Make him dictator for one minute and he'd pass a law making teachers the highest paid people in the land.

The essence of an opinion is finality – it doesn't matter whether it's sensible or not. And there's nothing so reassuring as received opinions, provided they're expressed in a provocative manner. Ian Grimble's *Speaking Personally* has so far consisted of elegant essays on sexual morality, cruelty and the gap between youth and age. Plenty to be sententious about there, and I have to report that each talk was stuffed with received ideas delivered as if they were startlingly paradoxical and new. Mr Grimble speaks beautifully, a little like Kenneth Robinson. He sounds wonderfully combative, but afterwards you wonder who got hurt by his arguments. The trouble with Radio 4's new muscular assertiveness is its mistaking style for substance and posture for performance. The *Reith Lectures* got off to a slow start, with Professor Halsey wasting time on statements and definitions belonging more properly to a foundation course in sociology, but he showed signs at the end of wanting to tell us how the hopeful England of 1945 went wrong. He should be worth following.

One 15-minute Radio 4 regular which gives pleasure is *Serendipity*. Running through the weekdays at 5.40 p.m., it offers snippets from BBC archives, Viennese dance music, genre-piece interviews, Fritz Spiegl's musical alphabet and a mixed bag on Fridays. Fixing the slots this way makes it easy to run – programmes can be recorded all together and then assigned to their respective week. It owes its quality to the imagination and stylishness of its presenters – Richard Ingrams, Charles Osborne and Derek Cooper among others. I have never cared for Fritz Spiegl's musical facetiousness, but I had to applaud him last week, when he introduced a cantata, *Narcissus*, by Samuel Butler, published in full score during Butler's lifetime. The libretto was funny enough, with the updated Narcissus singing of abandoning his flocks for such city holdings as fluctuating stocks, and the final chorus celebrating 'consolidated 3 per cents paid annually', but the real surprise was the music. Even in a piano-accompanied version, there was no mistaking the serious Handelian style of Butler's writing. It was not parody but straight imitation, and remarkably well done, especially a chromatic choral setting of the words 'one common doom'. I do not expect to hear anything so surprising this year.

Best listening of the month has come from adaptations of literary classics on Radio 3 – *Lancelot and Guinevere*, a beautiful rendering of the later books of Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*; *The Importance of Being Earnest*, four-act version; and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, with Sir John Gielgud as Christian

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and the familiar Vaughan Williams music. The Wilde was somewhat lacking in style, but the restoration of the solicitor Mr Gribsby, who arrives to take Algy/Jack to prison for debts accumulated by dining at the Savoy, was pure gain.

'Earplay', the American drama company which produces programmes for public radio in the States, has already had a great success with Albee's *Listening*. Now they have commissioned Arthur Kopit, who wrote *Indians*, to work on an hour's feature play and Radio 3 broadcast the result, *Wings*, in its *Drama Now* series. Kopit's theme is aphasia following a stroke and the resources of radio are used to laminate the sound worlds of a patient recovering from a stroke. The Jabberwocky of her speech as heard is poignantly counterpointed with her rational thoughts. That paranoid frustration which overwhelms even the most sanguine of people in hospital is imaginatively worked out by Kopit, and the bullying helpfulness of the staff nicely recorded. Some of the language twists are very interesting, especially the changes in verbs – e.g. she says that something she hears 'remembers me back'. Kopit's making her a pioneer aviatrix, a sort of Amelia Earhart, is less successful and leads to some clichéd dream scenes of trying to find a landing place while running out of petrol. There are so many symbols around she is bound to crash into one of them. Mildred Dunnock plays the bed-bound pilot with complete conviction.

Films

John Coleman

Seeing the Jock

One on One (A) *Warner 3; ABCs Shaftesbury Avenue, Fulham and Edgware Roads; Classic 1, Oxford Street*
Pardon Mon Affaire (X) *Curzon*
East of Elephant Rock (AA) *Classic 3, Oxford Street*
The Glenn Miller Story (A) *Plaza 4, from 26 January*
Rabid (X) *selected ABCs*

'Athletics offers a life of perpetual adolescence,' intones a young psychiatry prof., irritated that a younger and shorter basketball player on a sports scholarship should be taking over his girl. Something inside me (my mind?) offered a rider to that: 'and so does movie-going'. Down, voice. *One on One* is a healthy, wholesome success story, custom-built for all the family, about a sporting hick, Henry Steele (Robby Benson), bodily bought for Western University's squad by devoted coach Smith (G. D. Spradin) but finding his soul his own via the sort of adversity that can only lead to his being chaired off in triumph at the close. Mr Benson, who has an ingratiating grin, co-scripted the occasion with one Jerry Segal and it has to be said that he has not been backward in putting himself forward. He is assigned a tutor, Janet (Annette O'Toole, a lass with one of those new, credible faces), and she treats him contemptuously at first as a 'jock', just another freak with a physical skill. Via some intent discussion of *Moby Dick* – she: 'That's way I love Ahab'; he: 'Why don't you like jocks?' (aha!) – Janet comes to reckon Henry and, when coach wants to fire him, invites him to share bed, board and free tuition. To be as fair as possible to this moral and up-beat movie, cleanly directed by Lamont Johnson, one should allow it snatches of plausible, even punchy dialogue and a convincing excitement engendered at the level of ballsmanship; Mr Spradin is well found as the vile, win-at-all-costs coach; and there is a particularly inventive scene during which little Henry plays out a mock phone call to his proud, unknowing parents for the girl's benefit. A pity, then, that in every essential the film is as light on conviction as it is heavy on charm: for all its apparent freedoms, it reads jock-strapped.

Yves Robert's *Pardon Mon Affaire* incites the malevolent reviewer by its title, which may be interpreted as Cowardly or sheer cringe. In the event, we have here a hybrid, quite good graft. It is somewhat as if the prevailing atmosphere of those Ross Hunter-produced vehicles containing Doris Day and Rock Hudson had been *faisandé* with garlic and Gauloises. This French incident has a high American gloss and a cutting speed to match it. Four comfortably-off Parisian males regularly desert their wives and offspring to play tennis and set up extra-marital alibis for one another. An opening echo of Marilyn Monroe's windblown skirt in *The Seven-Year Itch* provides starters: a cautious civil servant, Etienne (Jean Rochefort nicely shifty under a moustache) gets the hots for this long-legged lady in red (Anny Duperey). His stumbling pursuit of the elusive Charlotte, a model plastered on posters constantly meeting his inflamed eye, is the central plot-string, but it pleasantly accumulates knots and crystals. Jean-Loup Dabadie's screenplay borrows from his domestic tradition of marivaudage, or verbal loops and swirls; it has a lumpish teenager falling for Etienne's delicious wife (Daniele Delorme, who improbably keeps her head and virtue when all around is chaos); pensively delineated other hubbies (a mother-cluttered fellow, a rake abandoned by his missus, a practical joker not above pretending blind and wrecking a café with his white stick) who come and go like refugees from Feydeau. Etienne even has an outdoor finale, high and stranded on a window-ledge near the Arc de Triomphe: his slow fall is the absolute end to a strange, engaging, grown-up comedy, a failure of someone's nerve or stamina. But how refreshing to see a real cross-fertilisation of French and American cinema getting as far as this.

Home again, the director Don Boyd unwisely came on stage before the press-show of *East of Elephant Rock* to announce an 'all-British' film, cast, technicians, everything except the locations. Time: 1948 – place: one of our colonies in S.E. Asia – source: Somerset Maugham. The last was a facile guess on your reviewer's part, since the credits ascribed story and screenplay elsewhere. No surprise, though, when better memories than mine came up with Maugham's *The Letter* and – specifically – a William Wyler version of this, starring Bette Davis and made in 1940. Mr Boyd has created something inordinately silly, putting a pseudo-Thirties score (by Peter Skellern) over an up-dated Twenties tale. John Hurt, living his name to the inch, is a liberal official on a mission to one of our mismanaged outposts. He has a native mistress, an affair with a child-bride (Judi Bowker), who delivers her wretched lines as if by a series of carrier pigeons), a habit of confiding his thoughts to a tape-recorder, and he gets shot. Not before time.

London movie-theatres, if not fashionable any more, are fissionable. There is now a Plaza 4, to be known as 'The Picture Palace', and aspiring to present 'classic films on a permanent basis'. What better way to promote this boast than a revival of *The Glenn Miller Story* (1954), surely high in most people's ratings as one of the more cosmetic falsifications of bandleaders' lives and wives ever concocted? James Stewart stammers and overlaps his own lines as usual, which helps: June Allyson splashily shupports his shearch for 'The Shound', rather as one after the Holy Grail. Strictly for nostalgia-addicts of the bad. A very nasty length of celluloid called *Rabid* is around. Should it come your way, stamp on it. The NFT has a Fritz Lang season afoot, going into February, and what promises to be an enlightening week (23-29 January) of new Swedish films. Lucky metropolitans, roll up.

Television

Russell Davies

Vox Pap

We are all fond of asking whether we get the TV we deserve, but it was as well to belt up about this while *Public Hearing* (BBC-2) was on last Saturday night. An audience of licence-holders from West Ham had packed into the North London Polytechnic to give the nobs from the Beeb a piece of their mind. The piece they came up with was unbelievably small. Bill Cotton, head of BBC-1 and Aunt Sally of the week, displayed no devastating command of logic, but in comparison with his interlocutors, he seemed to argue with Jesuitical remorselessness; while Jimmy Hill, at his side to defend football coverage, sounded quite boundlessly lucid and suave. The climax of the questioning came when a faction of lurid matrons near the back of the hall put in a claim for the return of some fraction of their colour-TV licences, on the grounds that so many programmes were in black and white. Challenged to name some, they racked their brains noisily for a while, but managed no reply, save the dying bleat that the late-night movie on Saturday nights was generally in monochrome. The whole

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programme made one angry: unreasonably angry with the invited audience, who were unable to liberate their brains from the tyranny of the vox-pop format (they had been invited to complain, and that's what they did, regardless); predictably angry with the BBC for indulging this cosmetic meet-the-people exercise *à la* Jimmy Carter; and sadly angry with the nature of TV, which, so far, shows no signs of being a real educator. It can show people new ideas, but it cannot make them start to think, once society has frozen them in the habits of servitude.

This is something that not even Melvyn Bragg has any immediate prospect of changing. His latest attempt to paper over the wide crack between popular taste and the cultural omnivorousness of his own university-trained class was unveiled later the same night. *The South Bank Show* (LWT) started to go out 15 minutes into *Match of the Day* (BBC-1). Suicidal, you would think, but the BBC played right into Melvyn's mittens by starting their show not with 'the action', as it is called, but with David Coleman relaying a snail's-pace version of the World Cup draw from Buenos Aires. We knew the results of this process already, from earlier news bulletins, so the Argentinians' slow parade of girls in national costume was even more bafflingly irrelevant than it should have been. Tactical sense had been sacrificed, already, to the necessity of giving Coleman something to do.

Anyway, back to Melvyn, his audience probably doubled by this goof. His new format was absolutely unsurprising, except that he had chosen to invite not three expert opinionators into the studio – which has been the practice on his shows before, and on the Radio 3 *Critics* – but just two. This was a mistake. Two 'experts' are all too liable to agree, especially if, as happened in the opening show, one dominates the other. Gerald Scarfe, despite a shirt that was almost too expensive for the camera to cope with, made a useful attempt to establish himself as a human being, but was otherwise swamped by Germaine Greer at her most sweetly reasonable. She will be back; I have me doubts about him. He just wasn't articulate enough – but worse than that, he sinned against Bragg's ideals by not taking the cultural manifestations on show quite seriously enough. This is Bragg's mistake; his tendency to treat every 'creative' event with the seriousness it *claims*, rather than the one his panellists find in it, may one day make him what I heard him called this week, an 'all-purpose glad-hander'. As for his compulsion to justify the People's Choice, this is grand-scale sentimentalism, as the much-touted interview with Paul McCartney showed. McCartney was charm itself, but that's all he needed to be to stay in the spirit of the proceedings. Musically, nothing was discovered or emphasised – not surprisingly, since McCartney the Songsmith has never learnt to write music, for fear of rupturing his talent. The only time we got near to his creative process was when he began to doodle a song about Bragg at the piano – an opening our host unaccountably failed to exploit.

Bragg had come-comed when Scarfe said something about enjoying David Mercer's TV play only on account of its 'randy vicar'; and though this wasn't, indeed, the world's most perceptive summary, it was hardly swept away the following evening by the play itself, *Flint* (BBC-1). The first 45 minutes were 'pure gold', Miss Greer had said. I don't think she would have if Mr Bragg hadn't been breathing the spirit of BBC/ITV cooperation at her across the studio floor. My prospector's eye spotted nary a nugget, I must say. The comedy was anarchic all right, but in the loosest possible sense. It was just a mess, throwing out babies and bathwater already ringed with scum by Joe Orton. John Le Mesurier, searching all corners of the studio ceiling for chimerical cobwebs, was at his most outrageously vague; but everybody else seemed an import into the situation, from comedies where they had been happier.

Monday night was American night. First Charles Wheeler, in *Panorama* (BBC-1), put some frightening dents in the world-wide complacency over Jimmy Carter. Apart from sounding disturbingly like Huckleberry Hound, Carter shows worrying signs of unfamiliarity with his own system – a charge not even James Fenton could make stick on Brahmin Jim. Then Desmond Wilcox's *Americans* series (BBC-2) kicked off with a batty portrait of the President of General Motors, Elliott M. Estes. Mr Estes gave every sign of believing that he could per-

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suade the world of his harmlessness by splashing around on a rubber turtle in his pool, playing the Hammond organ abominably, calling Wilcox 'Des', etc. The trouble was that Des seemed perfectly well disposed to aid him in this deception – an easy course, since Estes does have a well-developed endearing side. The other side emerged only when the subject of Ralph Nader came up. Was the company sorry about having attempted to throw dirt at Nader, Des inquired. It was possible to be sorry about doing that, came the reply, *or* about apologising to Nader afterwards. The latter, in Mr Estes's eyes, was the bigger error. From this point on, one was disposed to wonder aloud whether his hair was really that black.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Any Answers

The Bundle *Warehouse*
The Cherry Orchard *Riverside Studios*
Memoir *Ambassadors*

Edward Bond, who has posed some tortuous and tormenting problems in his time, calls *The Bundle* his first 'answer' play; and there's scant chance of missing its meaning because he has also provided audiences with an 'answer' programme, packed with gruff, prosey poems about crime, virtue and culture. 'He gave to the poor?' goes one, 'Sheltered the homeless? Visited the sick? Fed the neglected? Throw him in the fire! What did he do to change the world?' And again: 'What does the tool do? Change society – which is the relationship between owner and user. What is culture? Taking the power from the owner to give to the user. *That* is culture, the highest the human mind can aspire to.' Let me swiftly reassure you that the language of the play itself is mostly suppler and subtler than this. Its conclusion, or 'answer', is not. Indeed, I left the theatre feeling I'd seen Bond's celebrated *Narrow Road to the Deep North* cranked in and out of a computer whose innards had been painstakingly programmed by a robot marxist. And the name of this vandal, it seemed, was also Edward Bond.

In the earlier play the poet Basho, off to seek a spurious 'enlightenment' in distant climes, refuses to lumber himself with the abandoned baby he finds dumped in his path; and it grows up to be the tyrant Shogo. Just such a foundling confronts him again here, in what Bond has subtitled 'the new *Narrow Road to the Deep North*', but this time the long-term result is the steaming revolutionary, Wang. Basho, back from the same self-indulgent trek, now spends his days tossing off quaint haikus and dispensing justice on behalf of the unnamed 'landowner' who holds the local populace in ignorant poverty. He is a much more myopic and corrupt character than before, a clear indication (like Shakespeare in *Bingo*) of Bond's growing impatience with the artist who succumbs to the seductions of the status quo; and Wang, who has become his cosseted houseslave, renounces his blandishments with some ferocity. First, he hurls yet another abandoned 'bundle' into the river, presumably to dramatise his disenchantment with individual acts of kindness, his rejection of piecemeal amelioration and random reform. Then he transforms a gang of derelict bandits into a guerrilla army. By the play's end the landowner has fled, the villagers have grabbed power, and Basho has become a glum spectre who totters about impotently demanding 'respect for my office and my robe'.

The play has the energy and momentum we've come to expect of Bond. It bustles across decades without strain, whisks us from flooded graveyard to haut-bourgeois garden to rural slum to robber lair with the help of no more than a few frail and wonky sticks sprouting from a bare stage; and it offers opportunities to its cast which the likes of Bob Peck, Paul Moriarty, Patrick Stewart and Mike Gwilym, seize with spirit and flair. Everyone will admire the play's muscle and bone. The problem is its peculiar blend of hard-heartedness and soft-headedness. Of course, one of Bond's principal points is, as Wang puts it, that 'today we should look on kindness with suspicion – today only the evil can afford to be kind'; and I suppose this needs violent illustration if it is to mean much. But is the tossing of a tot to its death by drowning any less destructive an act than the stoning by thugs of a nursling in its pram, the famous atrocity at the core of Bond's *Saved*? In Howard Davies's production the impact is muffled by the ruse of transforming the baby into a clump of grey cloth that painlessly unfurls when thrown. But, viewed with the least imagination, it is still an arbitrary infanticide presented as a symbolic conversion to collectivist revolution: a human sacrifice to economic theory.

That's hard to swallow, especially from a writer we'd always supposed to be unnaturally sensitive about cruelty and suffering; but it would be less so if it were just an ugly bump on a road that twisted its way to a plausible destination. Alas, Wang's conquest of the bloodsucker class is achieved with outrageous ease, and the new order he establishes seems improbably relaxed and at one with itself. It is, of course, very nice to watch reclaimed derelicts sharing their rice, cracking jokes about their toes, and efficiently preparing to build walls and locks for the river that has so often flooded their crops in the past, perpetuating their penury. But it's a vision that comes a bit oddly from the author of *Lear*, in which, if you recall, the miseries inflicted by the popular liberationists were distinguished from those of the old oppressors only by their scientific calculation. From the man who once dubbed his own *Saved* 'almost irresponsibly optimistic', it seems positively incredible. If that was 'irresponsible', just because one of its slightly less loutish and abject characters stirred himself sufficiently to mend a chair at the play's end, how are we to describe the optimism of *The Bundle*? I never thought the morn would dawn when I would charge Bond of sentimentality; but his quest for an 'answer' has, I fear, landed him in precisely such a honeypot.

One last question – and it obliges me to postpone my kind words about the new *Cherry Orchard* until next week and to say no more about *Memoir* than that the author, John Murrell, could have slipped us much more information about Sarah Bernhardt and that Siobhan McKenna, roar and swagger as she may, gives no impression of having heard that chanting, wailing, screeching Phèdre whose awesome voice may still be heard on enlightened gramophones. What has *The Bundle* to do with our own sublunary agonies? Isn't the distress it describes too extreme, or at least too remote, for us to make the connections Bond presumably wants? There are equivalents of his landowner today, and they still keep the rump of mankind as close to the floor as they dare. But their creakiest way of maintaining power would be to leave their victims to the whims of an erratic river. They'd be ostentatiously building walls, encouraging investment in locks, courting popularity, buying time, and, in one way or another, bamboozling and bribing those they planned to go on exploiting. Oppression is more devious now than in 18th-century Japan, change stickier; and Edward Bond should be wise enough to recognise it.

Art

John Spurling

Ghosts

The King's Good Servant – Sir Thomas More *National Portrait Gallery*
Leonardo da Vinci – Anatomical Drawings *Royal Academy*

'When I get to heaven I mean to spend a considerable portion of my first million years in painting and so get to the bottom of this subject.' It is pleasant to think of old Churchill – restored, no doubt, to the appearance of his romantic self-portrait of *c.*1920, tall, straight and spotlit in a white, military-style coat with flaring lapels – dabbing colourfully at a ghostly canvas while we dull mortals try to get to the bottom of the Sutherland affair. The self-portrait was one of Churchill's best paintings, which isn't saying much; Sutherland, on the other hand, as last year's exhibition demonstrated, was not usually at his best in portrait-painting. His interest in the shell (clothes, pose, lines on the face) tends to ignore the creature within and he sees people without subjectivity, as he sees animals, insects and the roots of trees. The gap between Churchill's image of himself, which at his advanced age could have been sustained only by his wearing the Garter robes, and Sutherland's sharp eye for an old man in parliamentary dress could not be closed. Churchill sat himself loftily on a dais (even in the self-portrait he is looking down at himself); Sutherland peered coldly up and saw the loose flesh under the chin

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and the pin-striped crotch. Loyal Lady Churchill cut the gordian knot. Meanwhile London is ablaze with winter exhibitions. I shall leave the exhausting *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed* – even a cursory inspection takes three hours – until next month, when the catalogue should be ready, and catch up on two which opened before Christmas.

The trouble with *The King's Good Servant*, as with the recent TV adaptation of *Anna Karenina*, is that it lacks the essential ingredient. To extract characters, scenes and bits of dialogue from Tolstoy's novel and reproduce them as something between a social document and a historical romance is to remove them from their Tolstoyan fluid (his vision or desire for vision, his pursuit of 'the accursed questions') and make them, like stones picked up from a wet beach and taken home, colourless and ordinary. For the same reason the ghost of St Thomas More does not haunt his quincentenary celebration.

With the help of the catalogue one can observe in some detail most of the facets of his career: the early decision to enter the law rather than the monastery, the scholarship, the diplomacy, the role as refuter-in-chief of protestant heresies, the Lord Chancellorship, the martyrdom. But these documents and publications (he wrote nearly a million words in English alone in defence of the Church), even these sinister little woodcuts of religious cruelties (Richard Bayfield was, More considered, 'wel and worthely burned in Smythfelde'), amount only to the indispensable material for a biographer rather than a biography in themselves. The exhibition's setting is pokey and subterranean, with narrow corridors, low ceilings and abrupt changes of level, evoking the period but not this particular man. In the Byron show at the V & A and the Pepys show at this same address there were attempts to recreate the subjects' own rooms – conjuring tricks, no doubt, but conjuring is what's needed – whereas here there is only a little cell in the Tower which might call up as many perturbed spirits as Odysseus in Hades.

Of course there are excellent things to be seen, fragments of More's world around which one can reconstruct one's own mental play of Sir Thomas More (the manuscript of the one in which Shakespeare is thought to have collaborated with Heywood, Dekker and others is included in the exhibition). The elder Cranach's Luther, bareheaded against a grass-green background, is the very model of the revolutionary hero. Erasmus and Gillis, calm and sensitive at their desks (the diptych by Massys sent to More by his two friends has been reassembled for this show from Rome and the Earl of Radnor), represent the moderate, scholarly, but still Catholic humanism which seemed briefly to be the hope of Europe. Memorable images of three Popes, the King of France, the Grand Turk and Henry VIII with his controversial queens and his chief advisers stand for the complex cross-interests of established power. Then in the midst of all this public drama there are Holbein's loving sketches of members of More's family, done for the lost group-portrait which survives only in later copies.

Yet More himself, both in sketch and copies, remains a stern, public figure in cap and gown, more shell than man. He visualised utopia and burned heretics, he loved his family but remained half-monk, he was lawyer enough to make over his Chelsea property to trustees in advance of the Act of Attainder and to evade final condemnation until they brought perjured evidence: one forms a picture but one can't quite grasp him by the hand. A biographer or even an actor might have bridged the gulf, but the mere facts cannot compensate for the spirit's absence. On the scaffold he proclaimed himself 'the king's good servant, but God's first'. It is difficult to follow him after either that particular king, with his face at once wooden and soft, or that god, strikingly represented here by a reliquary containing part of St Thomas's hair shirt.

Leonardo's view of saints and the monks who guarded their relics was caustic: 'Those who have been dead a thousand years will defray the cost of living of many living men'. His own spirit walks most palpably among the dry bones, strapping muscles and vegetable innards of his anatomical drawings. My own knowledge of the catalogue, however, which is an anatomy lesson in itself, tells us that he discovered the maxillary antrum and the frontal sinus, was the first to illustrate the optic chiasma and that it was 200 years before anyone else noticed that the biceps rotate the hand as well as bending the elbow. He also made mistakes, in the anatomy of the central nervous system, in believing that tears rise from the heart to the eye and that the most active part of the semen comes from the spinal cord. But who, before or since, has shown the workings of the human body with such a combination of clarity and excitement? Simply the way the drawings are packed on to the page and what space is left taken up with closely written notes gives one a better sense of the kettle More was trying to keep the lid on than all the tracts and facts at the National Portrait Gallery. Leonardo was concerned to locate the seat of the soul when he made his masterly drawings of the skull: 'where the line a-m is intersected by the line c-b there the meeting place of all the senses is made.' He reckoned he had pinned it down, but whether he was right or not matters no more than whether Tolstoy ever managed to answer any of his accursed questions. You can still catch Leonardo's soul in that intersection.

Weekend Competition

No 2498 **Set by A. Boteman**

When the film *I am a Camera* came out, there was a review, you may (or may not) recall, which went simply: 'Me no Leica'. Competitors are asked to submit up to five notices, of a similarly agreeable brevity, for any film, play, ballet or opera. Maximum *six* words; by 3 February.

Result of No 2495 **Set by Val Policella**

The editor of the *Sunday Times* recently stated that he would like Prince Charles to head the 'Insight' team. We asked for examples of this, or any other, royal journalistic assignment.

Report **by Al Fresco**

Parrott has been getting a bit chippy lately. You can always recognise the signs: a fretting range of pseudonyms, quaint and worried typing errors, and a shower of greasy greenies dropping out of the envelope. The cause of his current insecurity has been the distribution of the bumper prizes kindly offered by Messrs Routledge Kegan & Paul (future sponsors please note). Fagg has had one; Sharpless too; Ransome as well; why, even Vita-Finzi has scored. So that it's with more than a sense of mere pleasure, but a realisation of the wider fitness of things, that we can finally pronounce the line we've been saving up for months: a Partridge for Parrott. Seven pounds as well, no less; and the same to the others.

Report **by H.R.H. Prince Charles**

My interest in humour, especially Goonery, is probably as well known as my mother's – sorry! – better say my father's in polo. Mr Keats's kind invitation gave me anticipatory pleasure, but in actuality I found that, despite the caveat in the terms of reference, many of you relied too heavily on the mere mention of well-known and perfectly legitimate interests of members of my family. Nor does one one oneself continually, and even if one does one one, why does one find one funny? With all the entries much of a muchness, I felt that, this being a socialist rag, it would be best just to award '£7' (not a sum I am familiar with) to the competitors always most in need financially: Elizabeth Windsor, E. Glamis, P. Mountbatten, and Mrs A. Phillips. Commendations to Mrs Snowdon. A sop for the unsuccessful. Mother's promised MBEs for the entry for the next six weeks. So push a bit harder, chaps, as we used to say at Gordonstoun (but don't any longer!). E. O. Parrott

Charles Windsor

(Roger Woddis is on holiday).

Little boy's dragged from his little old bed,
Howls as the water is splashed on his head.
Hush! hush! Fidget who dares –
Peter Mark Andrew is howling his prayers.

If he opens his lungs just a little bit more,
Somebody's bottom is going to get sore!
He's a beautiful blue – you'd think that
his blood
Was royal as mine, not one-half pure crud.

Little boy's back in his Gloucestershire pad.
To ride a cock horse like his gate-crashing dad.
Hush, hush! Quiet down there –
Peter Mark Andrew is up the back stair.

May Day

Unconfirmed rumours are rife here in the Gold Apple that my sister and brother-in-law are to star in an up-coming police series, *One And Wife*, for independent producers DPP. An anonymous spokesperson said that it will contain lots of car chases and snappy dialogue.

My father has definitely signed for Michael Winner's new film about British Industry. He will appear as Charles Bronson, or himself, or someone else entirely. Working titles are currently *Le Pied dans La Bouche*, and *Speeches Of The Naïve Kind*. My mother is denying that she is to appear in the new Sex Pistols movie, *Sex and Two Threes*. Exciting negotiations have begun for the Osmonds to play the Windsors in *Royal Story*: 'money means never having to say you're sorry.' More yocks and boffs, fax and info next week – until then, stay regal.

Roy Kelly

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Tony Miles

Chess

No 67 Cutty Sark Championship 1977

The Cutty Sark Grand Prix is the annual prize for the player scoring the best results in tournaments played in the United Kingdom. All events are included and points scored out of a maximum possible of 200 decide.

The 1977 competition reached a thrilling climax at Islington, the final event. At the start of play the leader was Dave Rumens with 181.5 ahead of Jim Plaskett 181.2 and Jeff Horner 180.5. So it stayed until the very last round, when George Botterill scored his fifth point (out of six) to come from nowhere and snatch first place and the £1,250 prize with a total of 181.7 (the others remaining unchanged).

It was a marvellous finish to a fine year for Botterill. In April he achieved his first IM norm in taking first place at the Birmingham International, and in August he won the British Championship for the second time. His winning Cutty Sark score was comprised of first places in the Islington open '76, British Championship, Lara and Torbay opens, equal first in the Manchester open and equal second at Islington '77.

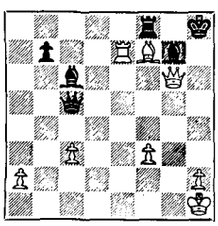
Hopefully this year he will manage his second IM result and make further progress in the international arena.

From the Aaronson open 1977.

White: G. S. Botterill Black: R. C. Lemon
1. P-Q4, N-KB3; 2. P-QB4, P-KN3; 3. N-QB3, P-Q4; 4. N-B3, B-N2; 5. P-K3, 0-0; 6. P x P, N x P; 7. B-B4, N x N; 8. P x N, P-QB4; 9. 0-0, N-B3; 10. Q-K2, Q-B2; 11. B-N2, B-Q2; 12. QR-B1, QR-B1; 13. P-KR3, Q-N1; 14. B-R3, N-R4; 15. B-Q3, P-N3; 16. B-R6, R-B2; 17. R-N1. Gradually the position becomes more and more uncomfortable for black. Now 17. . . . P x P loses the exchange to 18. B x P, but might still be worth consideration just to break the bind. **17. . . . Q-R1; 18. P-K4, R-K1; 19. P x P, P x P; 20. Q-K3, B-K3; 21. Q-B4.** Black lacks any safe squares for his pieces, and consequently, by simple direct moves white forces the gain of material. **21. . . . Q-Q1; 22. B-N5, R-KB1; 23. KR-Q1, Q-B1; 24. B-R6, Q x B; 25. Q x R, B x BP; 26. R-Q8, N-B3; 27. R x Rch, K x R; 28. B x P, Q-Q6; 29. R-N8ch! N x R.** Or 29. . . . K-N2; 30. Q x N. **30. Q x Pch, Resigns** (30. . . .K-N2; 31. Q-B8ch, K-B3; 32. Q-R8 mate).

Problem 67

White to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 1 February.

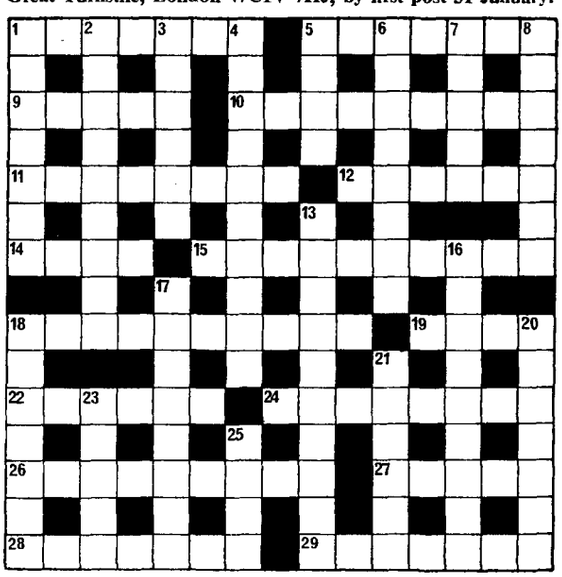


Solution to Problem 65

1. K-N2! (threatening K-B3 with a theoretical win) K-N5; 2. R-Q6! N-R2; 3. K-B2! (intending K-K3 with the same theoretical win) K-B5; 4. R-KR6! N-N4 (or N-B1, R-B6ch); 5. R-R4 mate!

Weekend Crossword 1250

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1250, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 31 January.



ACROSS

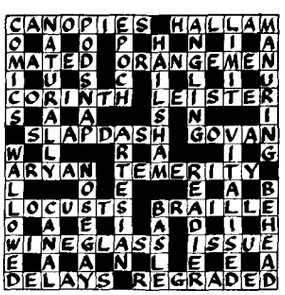
1. A clot is strangely indifferent to pain (7).
5. The language to allow this in a different construction (7).
9. Specimens without head or tail are adequate (5).
10. Plant which makes the brave disintegrate before inferior people (9).
11. Possibly sterling and they may be gold (8).
12. Place where ducks hold their drink (6).
14. Time for fruit (4).
15. Give credit to shrubs for providing a wooden handle (10).
18. Place where men get on or get ruined (10).
19. A fairy follows a page for the money (4).
22. Rents given for an acrobatic feat (6).
24. Campaign which will bring day of victory in a short time (8).
26. I come in to oust the beggar (9).
27. Remove from the water as easily as winking (5).
28. Held up action about a song (7).
29. Told as a member of the family (7).

DOWN

1. Well marked, but played outstanding game (7).
2. Buff constituency? (9).
3. Fish baskets provide little credit on fish (6).
4. *Offices filled by hot-stuff* politicians? (10).
5. Game bird? (4).
6. I start wandering about very softly, being a silent person (8).
7. It is part of a dog's make-up to suffer (5).
8. Poison has the edge over what makes one fast (7).
13. Bill is under several others in a big bed (10).
16. Gentle in a scramble but not refined (9).
17. People correspond without outward expression (8).
18. Treated improperly but regretted if heartless (7).
20. Though a fool he comes in large advertisement (7).
21. Put on show as rising tennis star without a point (6).
23. Signs of novices about to copy part of garment (5).
25. Sailor always on watch? (4).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1248



Prizewinners to No 1248

Keith Whetstone (Meriden)
Catherine St John (Ontario)
A. J. Goldfinch (London W13)

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CLAPHAM COMMON. Furn. two rooms & kitchen, single person. £54 mthly. Box 146.

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RESEARCHER/ADMIN OFF. seeks s.c. 1/2 bdrm flat, central/N. London. By necessity, £25 p.w. max. 828 0292 daytime.

GRAD. f. 31, seeks room(s) sep. kit., in private house, Muswell Hill/Highgate/Hampstead areas. Box 158.

HELP! Returning home. Couple req. London flat from 1 April. Approx. £30 p.w. Short let while seeking perm. place. Dr K. Brown, Salk Institute, PO Box 1809, San Diego, Ca 92112.

PERSON, 29, Mountaineer, Himalayas this summer, reqs defensible space until May. Cheap. Paul Lloyd 928 4977 ext 229 (day).

JOURNALIST, 31, socialist/feminist, urg. sks. N. London room. Mary. 733 5514.

RESPONSIBLE STUDENTS seek accom. especially single rooms/flats/houses. Ring London University 405 7686 ext. 468.

FAMILY HOLIDAY: 10 adults, 2 children seek house/s on coast 5-12 Aug. Box 91.

VISITING ACADEMICS. Landlords: we urgently require flats & houses within easy reach of the British Museum & the University. Helen Watson & Co. 637 4863.

Publications

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MAO ON STALIN. Three articles on Stalin's economic problems of socialism in the USSR, with a critical introduction by Communist Formation. 44pp; 40p + postage. *Also New Journal, Communist Formation,* issue No 1, 35p. Both available from Proletarian Publishing, 5 Eyre Crescent, Edinburgh EH3 5ET.

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SAPPHO. Lesbian/Feminist magazine 50p inc. post. Basement, 20 Dorset Square, London NW1 6QB.

LIBRARIES BOUGHT. Hammersmith Books, Barnes High St. London SW13. 01-876 7254

WORLD HISTORY. Books bought & Catalogues issued on most areas. A. C. Hall, 30 Staines Road, Twickenham, Mlddx.

REVIEW BOOKS and others in fine condition bought. D. Levin, Bookseller, 13 Grape Street, London WC2. 01-240 2376.

SECONDHAND Fiction and Biography, also new books at reduced prices, all at World of Books, 30 Sackville Street, London W1.

BOOKS WANTED?

Our next special BOOKS NUMBER of 24 February will contain a

Bookworm

column (see 13 Jan.). Any books or publications wanted can be *advertised for just 50p a line.* (Average 6 words a line, min. 2 lines. Box Numbers 50p extra.) Please enclose remittance with order and send now to:

Bookworm, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London, WC1 or Tel: Robin Cooper 01-242 5486.

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APPOINTMENTS

YOORALLA SOCIETY OF VICTORIA
DIRECTOR of RESEARCH

Applications are called for the position of Director of Research with Yooralla Society of Victoria.
Yooralla Society of Victoria is an organisation offering a wide range of services to physically handicapped people living in the State of Victoria — population 3.5 million.
Services offered by Yooralla Society of Victoria are provided for children and adults and include personal parent and family counselling: special education at kindergarten and school ages, with medical and paramedical support services: special workshops: accommodation facilities catering for short-term parent relief to long-term care: holiday accommodation: information and advice services on aids and appliances: and special transport catering for all services.
Appointee will be responsible to the Executive Director for the establishment of a new Research Department. Work is in the fields of social and community problems relating to the disabled and the evaluation of services currently offered by Yooralla Society of Victoria.
Applicants should have an appropriate University Degree at Masters or Doctorate level, and post-graduate research experience in the fields of Medical Sociology, Psychology or Social Work. This would preferably be in areas related to the introduction of innovative programmes for physically handicapped persons, and should include administrative experience.
Appointments will be for 3 years in the first instance.
The application should include full curriculum vitae and the names and addresses of three referees of whom two must be qualified to speak of the academic and research qualifications of the applicant.
Applications close on the 28 February 1978, to commence duties as soon as possible after this date.
Salary in the range of $A18,000.00 to $A25,000.00 according to qualifications and experience.
Further information can be obtained from:

Executive Director,
YOORALLA SOCIETY OF VICTORIA,
P.O. Box 88, SOUTH MELBOURNE, 3205,
VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA.
Telephone: 26 3731.

PART-TIME ASSISTANT SECRETARY

required by

BRITISH YUGOSLAV SOCIETY

to work in a new office to be established in Central London, starting early April. The Society aims to promote understanding and friendship between the peoples of Britain and Yugoslavia. It has members in all the main political parties, and enjoys the support of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Yugoslav Embassy.
This is a new post, with no other paid staff, and the man or woman appointed will need considerable organizing skill and some typing ability. The job will include servicing the Executive Committee, dealing with correspondence, arranging meetings and functions, preparing publicity material and regular bulletins to members, and assisting in initiating new activities. It should appeal to someone who has been employed in a responsible post. Salary up to £2,500 according to qualifications for a 20-hour week. Closing date for applications 31 January.

Further details from **MRS B. PUDDIFOOT, HON. SECRETARY, 5 COURT HOUSE, BASIL STREET, LONDON SW3.** **Tel. 01-589 5276.**

NATIONAL VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION

concerned with planning and the environment, urgently needs:

1) Someone to deal with membership records and subscriptions
2) An assistant to the Organising Secretary, with good audio typing. Salaries AAE

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Please ring 01-930 8903

UNVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH

Applications are invited for the post of Lecturer in the Department of Spanish. Preference will be given to candidates with a main interest in the culture and literature of both modern Latin America and Spain. The appointment will be effective from 1 October 1978.

Further particulars and application forms may be obtained from the Staff Appointments Officer, University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD.

Closing date 6 February 1978.
Ref. No 545.

HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICER

The GMWU are asking for applications for a Health & Safety Officer to set up a Health & Safety Section at Head Office to act as co-ordinator and adviser on all aspects of trade union involvement in health and safety at work. Experience and knowledge of workforce health and safety essential.

Salary: £5,000 p.a.

Applicants who recently applied for Research Assistant (Health & Safety) need not reapply.

Applications, with details, to LAWRENCE WHITTY, RESEARCH OFFICER, GMWU, THORNE HOUSE, CLAYGATE, ESHER SURREY KT10 0TL, by 27 JANUARY.

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Fluency in Swahili is essential for 2 of the positions, while a Master's Degree in Political Science or related field is necessary for the third.
Location: The posts are based in London, but the jobs will entail extensive overseas travelling. Age: 24-35. Salary: £5,000 p.a.
Applications in own handwriting enclosing C.V. should be addressed to:

The General Manager, Africa Journal Ltd, Kirkman House, 54A Tottenham Court Rd, London W1P 0BT

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ARROW BOOKS

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3 Fitzroy Square, London W1.
Tel: 01-388 7601.

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Applications in writing giving details of age, education, qualifications, experience and present salary to: Mr. T. E. Hughes, Labour Adviser, Co-operative Union Ltd, Holyoake House, Hanover Street, Manchester, M60 0AS.

Re-advertisement — Previous applicants should reaffirm in writing their continued interest in the vacancies.

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Applications are invited for a post of Lecturer/Assistant Lecturer in Sociology. It is hoped to recruit a candidate with a special interest in sociological theory, political sociology and/or Southeast Asian societies, but candidates with other special interests are also welcome to apply and will be carefully considered.

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Further particulars and application forms may be obtained from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (Appts), 36, Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF, or the Assistant Secretary (Recruitment), University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong. Closing date for applications is 28 February 1978.

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Further details and appplication form from: Mr C. Padget, Kingsway Hall, London WC2B 6TA.

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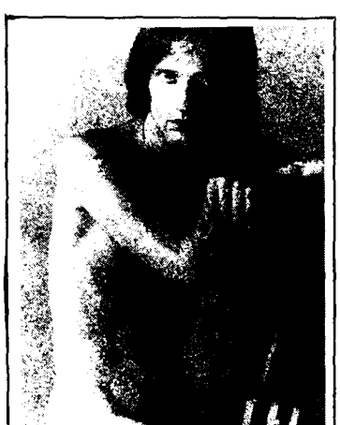

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Theatres

ALDWYCH (Royal Shakespeare Company) 836 6404. Recorded booking info. 836 5332. No perf. Mon. Then Congreve's 'The Way of the World' (red. price previews from 24 Jan. first night 27 Jan.). See daily press for dates and times.
RSC also at The Warehouse at Donmar Theatre in Charles Wood's 'Dingo' (first night 26 Jan). Also at Piccadilly in final perfs. 'Wild Oats' and Savoy Theatre in 'Man and Superman'.

ALMOST FREE THEATRE. 485 6224. Opens Sun. 22 Jan. 'The Irish Hebrew Lesson' by Wolf Mankowitz. This Sun. at 2.30 & 8 p.m. Mon.-Thurs. 1.15.

BROADWAY THEATRE. 248 3836. 'Funny Relations' "did you hear the one about the Cockney, the IRA man and the National Front enthusiast . . ?" New musical. Opens 7 Feb. 8 p.m. nightly.

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE. 722 9301. The "touchingly tentative sexuality" . . (S. T.) of 'Penny Whistle' by Lawrence Dobie directed by Nancy Meckler.

ROYAL COURT. 730 1745. Prevs at 8 p.m. Opens Tues. 24 Jan. 7 p.m. subs eves 8, Sats 5 & 8.30. World Premiere of 'Laughter' by Peter Barnes.

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THEATRE ROYAL, WINDSOR. 95 61107. Until 4 Feb. 'Cinderella'.

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SCREEN ON THE HILL. 435 3366 (opp. Belsize Park Tube). Visconti's 'The Innocent' (X). Progs at 2.05, 4.25, 6.45, 9.05.

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THE WORKERS' MUSIC ASSOCIATION presents an International Festival of Friendship in Song and Dance. Performers include the Azanian Singers and Dancers from South Africa. Saturday, 21 January, at 7.30 p.m. in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Tickets £1 each at the door. Inquiries 01-727 7005.

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Meetings

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. Lunch Hour Lectures, 1.20 to 2. Admission free. 24 Jan. 'Virgin Birth re-assessed' by Dr Ursula Mittwoch; 26 Jan. 'Bezhin Meadow' (unfinished fragments by Eisenstein). Film.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON (Gower St, WC1E 6BT). The Freud Memorial Lectures in Pyschoanalysis by Dr Hanna M. Segal. 'Phantasy, Dreams and Symbolism'. Mondays at 5.30, 30 Jan. 6, 13 Feb. Admission free, without ticket.

'THE WEST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA'. Speakers: Richard Luce MP, Opposition spokesman on African Affairs and Johnson Ndlovu, a Zimbabwean at the Commonwealth Secretariat. 6.30 p.m. Tuesday 31 Jan. Adm 25p for non-members of RCS. Focus Group, Royal Commonwealth Society, 18 Northumberland Ave, WC2. 930 6733.

PETER ROBBINS, Rugby correspondent for 'The Financial Times', will give a lecture in English on the 'Development of English and French Rugby' (followed by the film: France V. Wales, 1976) on Tuesday 24 January at 6.15 p.m. at the French Institute, Queensberry Place, SW7. Tel: 01-589 6211 ext. 38. Admission free.

ASSEMBLY FOR DISARMAMENT and Peace will take place in London at the Camden Centre, Euston Road, London NW1 on 28/29 January. Speakers will include Sean MacBride, Nobel Peace Prize winner, Ian Mikardo MP, Lucas Aerospace and Vickers Shop Stewards plus leading church and peace group speakers. Sponsored by numerous trade unions, peace groups, church bodies and sections of six political parties. All organisations are asked to appoint delegates as soon as possible (fee £4 covers all documentation) and individuals are also welcome. Details from ADP, 29 Great James Street, London WC1N 3EY or ring 01-242 0362.

SERIES ON RACIST ZIONISM: Hear Akiva Orr (Israeli Anti-Zionist) speak on 'Zionism and the Non-Sectarian Alternative in Palestine'. Chairman: Tony Greenstein. Sun. 29 Jan. at 2 p.m. Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq. London Region British Anti-Zionist Organisation (BAZO), c/o 58 Old Brompton Rd, SW7.

SHAW SOCIETY. Margot Strickland, Biographer and Novelist on 'Shaw and Ellen Terry'. Friday 27 Jan. at Conway Hall, WC1. Coffee 6.30, Lecture 7 p.m.

CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY, 25 Jan. 7.30 p.m. Peter Shore, Secretary of State for the Environment: 'Can the Inner Cities Survive?'. Mary Ward Hse, 5 Tavistock Place, WC1 (Nr Russell Sq. tube).

BUDDHIST SOCIETY, 58 Eccleston Square, London SW1. Sat. 21 Jan. 3 p.m. 'Open Day' Tues. 24 Jan. 6.30 p.m. 'Introducing Buddhism'. Wed. 25 Jan. 6.30 p.m. Public Lecture 'Snowy Heron in the Bright Moon Hides'—Michael Hughes. All welcome. Send s.a.e. for full programme.

THEOSOPHY. Informal Forum on Basic Theosophy. Sun. 22 Jan. 8 p.m. All welcome. S.a.e. free pamphlet, talks programme, booklist. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2.

Courses

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University College of Swansea

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